



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Stopping Strokes

World Stroke Day – October 29, 2013

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Strokes are caused by either an obstruction of blood flow to the brain or bleeding in the brain. Nearly 800,000 strokes occur each year in the U.S. and are among the leading causes of disability.

Dr. Amy Valderrama is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss ways to prevent strokes. Welcome to the show, Amy.

[Dr. Valderrama] Thanks, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Amy, let's start—what are the symptoms of a stroke?

[Dr. Valderrama] The most common signs and symptoms of stroke are sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg; sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or understanding; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance, or loss of coordination; and sudden severe headache with no known cause.

[Dr. Gaynes] What should you do if you think someone is having a stroke?

[Dr. Valderrama] If you notice any signs or symptoms of a stroke, you should call 911 immediately. The chance of survival and recovery is much higher if you get emergency treatment right away. Every minute counts.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are certain people more susceptible to strokes?

[Dr. Valderrama] High blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking are key risk factors for stroke. About half of Americans have at least one of these three risk factors. And other medical conditions and lifestyle factors can also put people at higher risk for stroke, and these include heart disease, diabetes, being overweight or obese, eating a poor diet, being physically inactive, and drinking alcohol excessively. And although stroke risk increases with age, strokes can happen at any age.

[Dr. Gaynes] Amy, what can people do to decrease their chance of having a stroke?

[Dr. Valderrama] Eat a healthy diet, maintain a healthy weight, be physically active, don't smoke, and limit alcohol intake. If you have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease, follow your health care provider's instructions to keep your condition under control. People who have these conditions and keep them under control have a lower chance of having a stroke.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about preventing strokes?

[Dr. Valderrama] They can go to cdc.gov/stroke.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Amy. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Amy Valderrama about ways to prevent strokes.

Remember: Controlling blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes; maintaining a healthy weight; eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables and low in fat; limiting alcohol consumption; and quitting smoking can all decrease your chances of having a stroke. If you think someone is having a stroke, call 911 and get medical help immediately.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.