

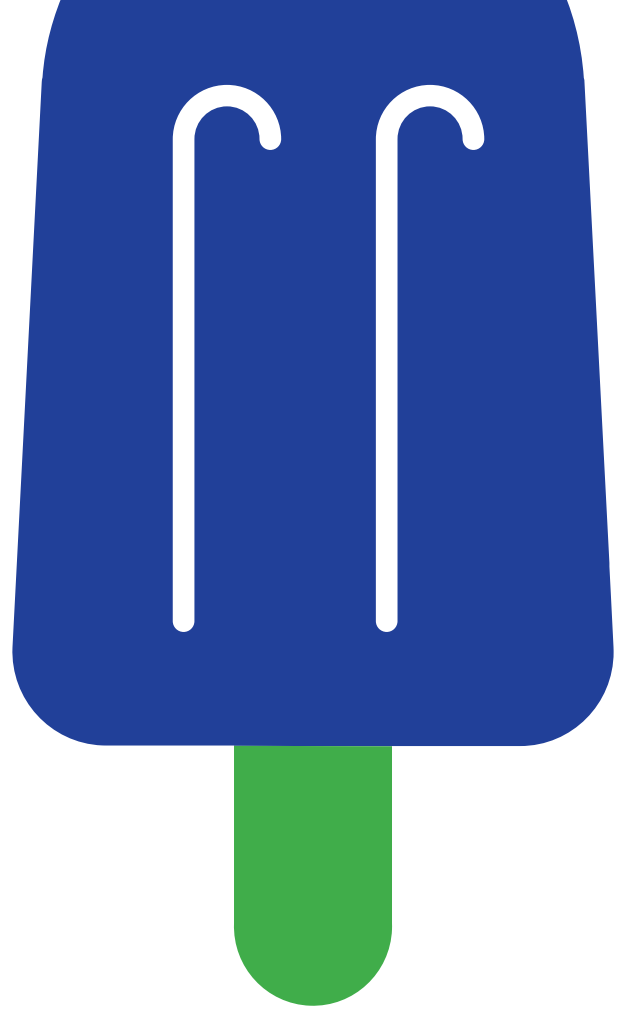
UNDERSTANDING DIABETES AND STROKE.



Stroke happens either when the blood supply to part of your brain is cut off because of a blood clot or when a brain artery ruptures and leads to a haemorrhage. Stroke is a leading cause of death and disability worldwide, but most strokes can be prevented by addressing a small number of key risk factors.

1 in 5 people who have a stroke are diabetic and people with diabetes have poorer outcomes from stroke compared with the rest of the population.

Stroke and diabetes share many risk factors, most of which can be addressed with lifestyle changes and/or medication. This leaflet provides information about the links between diabetes and stroke and about the steps to take to reduce your risk.



WHAT IS DIABETES?

When you have diabetes your pancreas either stops producing insulin, or the insulin it produces doesn't work properly. Your body uses insulin to convert the sugar (glucose) in your blood to energy. There are two types of diabetes – Type 1 and Type 2. Type 1 diabetes develops when your body stops producing insulin and glucose builds up in your bloodstream. Type 1 diabetes usually begins in childhood or adolescence.

Type 2 diabetes develops when your body doesn't produce enough insulin or your body doesn't react to it in the right way. Type 2 diabetes is much more common than Type 1 and tends to develop in adulthood.

Another kind of diabetes called gestational diabetes can affect pregnant women. It usually goes away after childbirth but can increase a woman's risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

WHY DOES DIABETES INCREASE STROKE RISK?

Diabetes contributes to hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis), which increases the risk of blood clot or a ruptured blood vessel. People with diabetes are also likely to experience a number of additional stroke risk factors including obesity, poor diet, inactivity, high cholesterol.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE DIABETES?

Many people with Type 2 diabetes won't know they are diabetic as the condition usually gets worse over time.

Diabetes is often identified through blood or urine tests. You should ask your health provider for a test if you have any of the risk factors for diabetes, stroke or cardiovascular disease, or if you have any of the symptoms of diabetes.

SYMPTOMS OF TYPE 1 AND TYPE 2 DIABETES

- **Frequent urination, particularly at night**
- **Excessive thirst**
- **Fatigue**
- **Unintended weight loss**
- **Genital itching and repeated yeast infections**
- **Cuts or wounds taking longer to heal**
- **Blurred vision**

YOU'RE MORE AT RISK OF DEVELOPING TYPE 2 DIABETES IF YOU

- **Are over 40** (or 25 for south Asian people)
- **Have a close relative with diabetes** (such as a parent, brother or sister)
- **Are overweight or obese**
- **Are of south Asian, Chinese, African Caribbean or black African origin**
- **Are pregnant**, or have previously been diagnosed with gestational diabetes

HOW IS DIABETES TREATED?

Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes are lifelong conditions that can be managed with medication and/or lifestyle changes. Type 1 can be controlled with insulin injections. The most common drug treatment for Type 2 diabetes is metformin.

Some people with Type 2 diabetes can reduce their blood sugar levels to normal level by changing their lifestyle, people who have been recently diagnosed and who lose weight are more likely to be able to achieve this. However regular exercise, weight loss and a healthy diet can all reduce blood sugar. If you have been diagnosed with diabetes you should continue to have regular blood sugar checks and take prescribed medication as advised.

I AM DIABETIC, HOW CAN I REDUCE MY RISK OF STROKE?

There are some specific stroke risk factors that people with diabetes should take action to address

- **Blood pressure** – high blood pressure is a risk factor for stroke
- **Control cholesterol**
- **Quit smoking**
- **Maintain a healthy weight**
- **Eat a healthy diet**
- **Regular exercise**

1 in 4 people are at risk of stroke in their lifetime, but by taking simple steps almost all strokes can be prevented. For more information on stroke risks and prevention visit

www.worldstrokecampaign.org



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