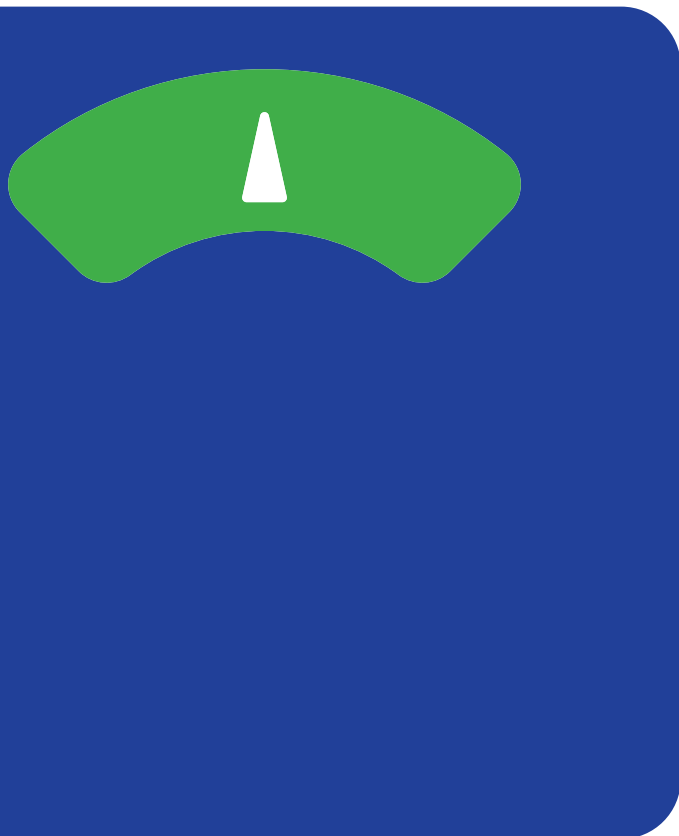


UNDERSTANDING WEIGHT AND STROKE.



Stroke happens when the blood supply to part of your brain is cut off, either because of a blood clot or 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.



HOW DOES MY WEIGHT AFFECT MY RISK OF STROKE?

Being overweight is one of the top ten risk factors for stroke and is associated with almost 1 in 5 strokes. Being categorised as overweight increases your risk of stroke by 22% and if you are obese that risk increases by 64%. This is because carrying too much weight increases your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, high cholesterol and type 2 diabetes which all contribute to higher stroke risk. Maintaining a healthy weight will help you reduce your risk of stroke.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE?

We can all stand on the scales and measure our weight, but there are particular measures that can tell us if we are officially overweight or obese. The most widely used measure is called Body Mass Index, or BMI. BMI is a measure of body fat, based on height and weight which applies to men and women between the ages of 18-65.

BMI can be used to indicate whether you are underweight, normal, overweight or obese. You can calculate your BMI using an online calculator, you can find one on the WSO endorsed Stroke Riskometer app, or by using this formula:

**BMI = (WEIGHT IN KILOGRAMS /
(HEIGHT IN METERS X HEIGHT IN METERS))**

OR

**BMI = (WEIGHT IN POUNDS /
(HEIGHT IN INCHES X HEIGHT IN INCHES)) X 703**

If your BMI is greater than or equal to 25 you are overweight, if you have a BMI greater than or equal to 30 you are defined as obese.

Another body measure which can be used to calculate your health risks is your hip to waist ratio (HWR). Studies have shown that people who carry fat around their middle have greater risks to their health than those who carry it around their hips. HWR is also a better predictor of stroke risk in older people.

To measure your HWR divide your waist measurement by your hip measurement. A normal ratio is 0.8 for women and 0.9 for men, from 0.8-0.84 for women and 0.9-0.99 for men is considered overweight. Above these two ratios is considered obese.

I AM OVERWEIGHT HOW CAN I REDUCE MY RISK?

If you are overweight, losing as little as 7-10 percent of your body weight may improve many of the problems linked to being overweight, such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

Focus on getting more exercise and eating a healthy diet that consists mostly of unprocessed fruit and vegetables. *(see our factsheets on Diet and Stroke Prevention and Exercise and Stroke Prevention).*

I AM OBESE HOW CAN I REDUCE MY STROKE RISK?

If you are obese or morbidly obese you can take the same steps to reduce your weight as anyone. You should also talk to your doctor about how your weight may be affecting your overall health and make sure that you have regular blood pressure, heart, blood sugar and cholesterol checks. You might want to discuss medication to manage your stroke risks, while you work with a healthcare professional on a plan to reduce your weight.

Your individual weight loss plan will depend on how much weight you need to lose, your overall health and your commitment to weight loss. Treatment could include a combination of diet, exercise, behaviour modification and sometimes weightloss drugs. If you are morbidly obese, your doctor may recommend gastrointestinal surgery.

TIPS FOR ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WEIGHT

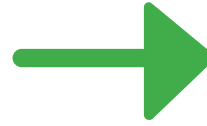
Aim for a healthy weight loss of 1-2 pounds per week. Making small but sustainable long-term changes in your eating and physical activity habits is the only way to lose weight and keep it off. Avoid faddy diets that promise fast weight loss, it is unlikely that will be able to stick to these and you may not get the nutrients you need.

Eat a healthy diet. Increase your consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables of foods, wholegrains and avoid sugars and saturated fats.

Get moving! Make physical activity a part of your daily life. 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day on most days of the week will reduce your risk of stroke and help you to manage your weight.

Stay motivated using online apps to track food intake and exercise can help keep you on track. The WSO endorsed Stroke Riskometer app provides tailored information and motivational tools to help you reduce your stroke risk.

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



This information
was developed by:



With support from:

