

Trover Health

Update

FALL 2007

Stroke: Knowledge Is Your Best Defense



Research shows that a lot of people are unaware of the causes and warning signs of stroke—facts that could save their lives. Many strokes can be prevented, and those that do strike can often be successfully treated if people seek emergency care right away.

Do you know how to protect yourself against stroke?

Test Your Knowledge

Circle T for true and F for false:

1. High blood pressure is the most common risk factor for stroke. **T F**
2. Certain nutrients in your diet can lower your stroke risk. **T F**

3. Fatigue and chest pains are warning signs of stroke. **T F**

4. If you suspect a stroke, lie down until the symptoms subside. Then, call your doctor. **T F**

Check How Well You Did

1. **True.** Studies show that even a slight reduction in blood pressure can reduce stroke risk by as much as 42 percent in people with high blood pressure.

Other chronic conditions also increase the risk of stroke, including heart disease, diabetes, and high cholesterol. Properly managing these conditions can significantly reduce the possibility of a stroke.

2. **True.** Research indicates that getting enough folate, vitamin B12, and vitamin B6 can positively affect the amount of homocysteine in the blood, which is associated with stroke risk. If you're not getting enough of these vitamins in your diet, consider taking a supplement. In addition, experts recommend eating lots of fruits and vegetables, and limiting your intake of salt and saturated fat.

Other lifestyle choices that decrease stroke risk include:

- not smoking. Research indicates that smoking increases the risk of stroke by 50 percent. But within five years after quitting, former smokers can expect their risk level to fall to that of people who have never smoked.
- exercising regularly. Moderate exercise has been shown to reduce stroke risk by as much as 41 percent.
- limiting alcohol to light or moderate consumption.

3. **False.** Warning signs include:

- sudden weakness or numbness of the face or limbs
- sudden dimming or loss of vision, particularly in one eye
- sudden difficulty speaking or understanding speech
- sudden, severe headache with no known cause
- unexplained dizziness, unsteadiness, or sudden falls, especially when accompanied by other signs.

4. **False.** Get to the emergency room right away. Speed is critical. Clot-dissolving drugs and other medications can maximize a person's chance for a full recovery if delivered in time. ■

We Want to Hear from You!

Is there a health topic that you would like to learn more about? Let us know and we'll add it to our next issue. Call 270-825-5869 or email mhicklin@trover.org.



inside:

Feelings:
Friends or Foes?
page 2

Do You Suffer from
Dry Mouth?
page 2

Q & A: Do You Live in
a Sick Home?
page 3

How to Make
Memories Last
page 4

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Be a Smart Healthcare Consumer



Your money is valuable—especially the dollars you put toward your health. Here are some tips that can make you a

smarter healthcare consumer:

1. **If it's too good to be true, it probably is.** Be wary of products or treatments that make really generous claims.
2. **Know your personal health record.** Your health history is key to understanding your future risk for certain diseases—and how to reduce their impact.
3. **Go generic.** You may think brand name drugs are better, but that's not necessarily so. Talk with your doctor to see if generics are an option for you.
4. **Learn to speak "insurance."** Here are a few key words you should know:

- **Co-payment:** A set amount you pay whenever you receive medical services.
- **Premium:** What you pay up-front for coverage.
- **Out-of-pocket costs:** The portion of your bills that you pay.
- **Deductible:** The total amount you must pay each year before your plan begins to pay.

We hope you are enjoying our newsletter. If you have suggestions on how we can better serve you, please email info@trover.org.

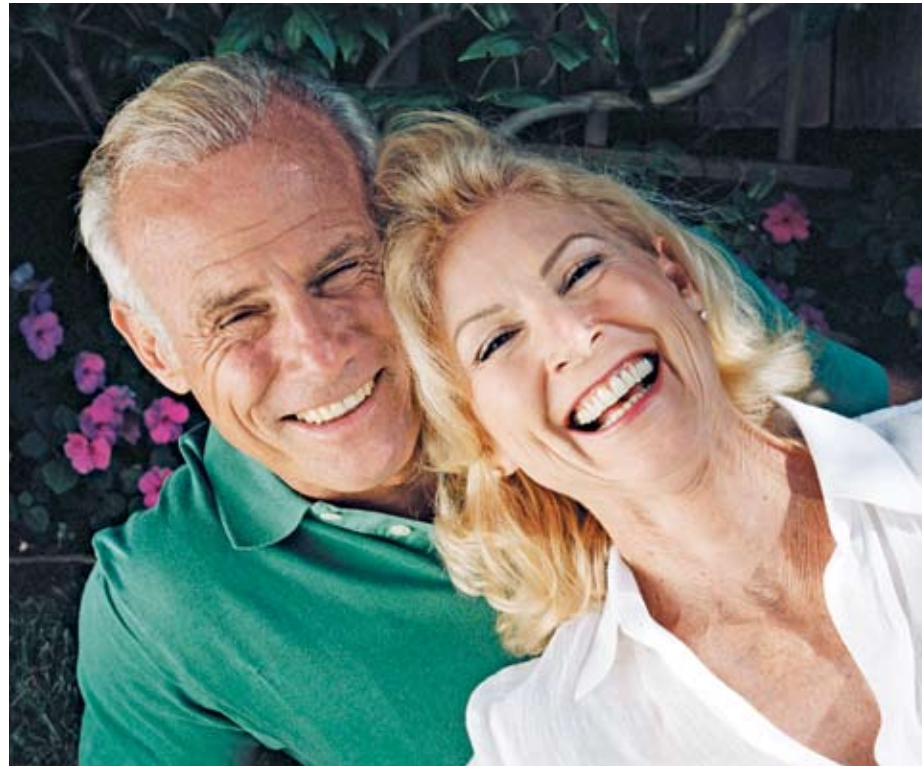
Thank you.

Sincerely,

E. Berton Whitaker

E. Berton Whitaker
CEO and President
Trover Health System

Feelings: Friends or Foes?



Good emotional health doesn't mean always feeling happy. Managing your emotional health means recognizing what you feel—anger? sadness? fear?—understanding why you feel it, and knowing how to express it appropriately. Because emotions are powerful, you may shy away from dealing with them. Consider these coping strategies for getting a handle on intense feelings:

- **Avoid bottling up your emotions.** Allow yourself to feel them and communicate them. Talk with someone you trust if something is upsetting you.
- **Don't act on emotions immediately.** Take time to think so you don't do anything you'll regret.
- **Take care of yourself.** A healthy diet, regular exercise, and enough sleep can help you feel good inside and out. ■

Colorectal cancer—or cancer of the colon or rectum—is second only to lung cancer as the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S. Fortunately, this type of cancer can be treated successfully if it is found early. Anyone can get colorectal cancer, but

more than 9 out of 10 cases occur in adults age 50 and older. Screening offers the single best method of discovering colorectal cancer at a treatable stage. There are many screening options. Your doctor can help you decide which screening is right for you.

Do You Suffer from Dry Mouth?

Dry mouth is common among older adults. But it is not a natural part of aging. As people get older, they are more likely to use medicines or suffer health problems that interfere with the flow of saliva.

Hundreds of medicines list dry mouth as a possible side effect, including those for hypertension and depression. Dry mouth also can be caused by dehydration and other health problems, including diabetes, Parkinson's disease, and Sjögren's syndrome. Sjögren's syndrome affects the body's moisture-producing glands. Dry mouth is also a common side effect of radiation therapy for cancers of the head and neck.

Dry mouth is not just uncomfortable. It can lead to serious health problems and can harm a person's overall quality of life. Saliva aids in swallowing, eating, and talking. It also washes away harmful bacteria that

contribute to cavities, tooth decay, and infections.

If you have dry mouth, see your doctor. Treatment will depend on the underlying cause. Your doctor may recommend these self-care measures:

- Chew sugar-free gum.
- Suck on sugar-free candy or mints.
- If you smoke, quit.
- Try an over-the-counter saliva substitute.
- Use a humidifier.
- Steer clear of salty foods.
- Drink lots of water.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine. Also, choose an alcohol-free mouthwash.



Q&A

DO YOU LIVE IN A SICK HOME?

Q What exactly is a “sick” home?

A Some homes may have poor indoor air or contain airborne substances called allergens. These conditions can set off asthma and other allergic reactions in people who are sensitive to them. They also can cause “sick building syndrome.” People with this condition are usually only affected when they are in the “sick” building.

Q How can you tell if your home is making you sick?

A If anyone in your family coughs or wheezes a lot—and they don’t have a cold or other illness—it may be a sign that your home is making them sick. Another sign is whether symptoms tend to subside away from home. Other symptoms include:

- dark circles under the eyes
- headache
- eye, nose, and throat irritation
- tiredness.

Q What contributes to a sick home?

A Homes with high indoor humidity levels have higher levels of two common allergens: house-dust mites and mold. Dampness and mold lurk in 20 to 50 percent of modern homes. Cockroaches, pet dander, and chemicals from building and furnishing materials are other culprits.

Some allergens are visible to the eye, such as water-damaged walls and furniture. But, in some cases, the problem substances are invisible. These include:

- airborne lead
- fumes from fireplaces and gas or kerosene stoves
- radon
- tobacco smoke
- pollen
- chemicals released from some cleaning supplies and from new carpet, draperies, and upholstered furniture.



How to Keep Your Home “Healthy”

- Vacuum carpets and clean floors once a week.
- Wash clothes, bedding, and curtains in hot water to kill dust mites.
- Put teddy bears and other soft toys in the freezer for 24 hours to destroy mites on a regular basis.
- Regularly clean bathroom and kitchen surfaces with bleach to reduce mold.
- Use allergen-proof covers on pillows, mattresses, and comforters.
- To discourage roaches, wash dishes and clean up crumbs and spills immediately.
- Keep your heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system clean and in working order. Consider using a dehumidifier when the humidity is high.
- Consider investing in an air cleaner and/or vacuum cleaner with an HEPA air filter. Some evidence suggests these may reduce dust, mold, and pet dander.
- Keep pets out of bedrooms.

**Got a health question?
Email us at info@trover.org.**

CONQUERING THE CHALLENGES OF FIBROMYALGIA

Many women feel tired and run down but attribute their lack of energy to their hectic lives. However, if tiredness also is accompanied by widespread joint, tendon, ligament, and muscle pain that’s been hanging around, you may have fibromyalgia.

More Women Affected than Men

Fibromyalgia also causes widespread pain for at least 3 months and tenderness in at least 11 of 18 tender-point spots, including:

- neck
- shoulders
- chest
- rib cage
- lower back
- thighs
- knees
- elbows
- buttocks.

People with fibromyalgia also can experience any of the following:

- fatigue
- anxiety
- numbness in hands and feet
- headaches
- digestive problems.

Although symptoms can come and go, you usually always experience some degree of pain.

A Challenge to Diagnose

It’s difficult to determine if you have fibromyalgia. Diagnosis is hampered by the fact that fibromyalgia pain is similar to the pain associated with various types of arthritis, hypothyroidism and chronic fatigue syndrome.

Comprehensive Approach to Treatment

The goal of treatment is to control pain and to improve daily functioning. Work closely with your doctor. A variety of measures may be recommended, such as:

- Regularly participate in low-impact aerobic exercise, such as swimming, water aerobics, or riding an exercise bike.
- Get enough rest.
- Relax! Massage can provide short-term relief from muscle pain, while relaxation therapy can help relieve muscle tension and stress.

Community Calendar

GENERAL CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

TIME: **First Wednesday of the month**

CONTACT: Rita Cates
270-825-5815

BECKY WEST BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

TIME: **Second Tuesday of the month**

CONTACT: Rita Cates
270-825-5815

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP

TIME: **Third Tuesday of the month**

CONTACT: Patty Simmons, RN
270-825-4103 or Patsy Ball
270-821-4488

Trover offers a wide array of health events and programs for the community. Call Trover Community Health today, at **270-824-3454**, to find out more.



How to Make Memories Last

Everyone's been through it: You know that you've met that woman, but you can't recall her name. Or maybe you can't remember where you parked your car. By learning certain mental tricks, you may be able to make these lapses a distant memory.

Experts have discovered that there are ways to "program" your memory system. Practicing certain mental strategies can improve your ability to recall names, dates, and other information.

Memory Recall

Not surprisingly, people are more likely to remember emotional events. You're also more likely to recall events that you pay a lot of attention to or that relate to something you already know.

Knowing these facts, you can begin to improve your memory. For example, try these strategies:

- "Store" facts around a familiar room. For example, if you want to remember to pick up some milk at the grocery store, picture a milk carton sitting on your kitchen table.
- Connect the name of someone you just met to a famous person or a friend. For Ben, think Benjamin Franklin.
- Give important information your full attention. And make notes or lists to help you store important facts.

- Make up rhymes or sentences. For instance, "I before E, except after C."
- Repeat new facts, like a person's name, to help implant them in your mind.

Healthy Body, Healthy Memory

The following healthy choices also can positively affect memory:

- Eat breakfast. Children who skipped breakfast had slower memory recall than those who ate a morning meal. One reason may be low glucose, or blood sugar, levels.
- Manage stress. Stress causes the body to release cortisol, a hormone that may inhibit memory.
- Prevent—or control—heart disease and high blood pressure. These conditions have been linked to mental decline.
- Keep your mind active with challenging activities. Read the newspaper or learn a foreign language.

Some memory loss is natural with age. For instance, forgetting where you just left your glasses is normal. However, forgetting that you wear glasses is not. If you're worried about your memory, see your doctor. ■



Fall 2007 • www.troverhealth.org • Trover Health System • 800-998-5100

Trover
900 Hospital Drive
Madisonville, KY 42431

Postmaster: Please deliver
between September 24-28.

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Trover

Trover

Trover Health Update is a publication of Trover. The information provided is intended to educate readers about subjects that are pertinent to their health, not as a substitute for consultation with a personal physician. For more information on classes or programs, consult the Trover website, www.troverhealth.org. For questions or suggestions on content, please contact Mellissa Hicklin, Marketing and Public Relations at **270-825-5869** or mhicklin@trover.org.

© 2007. Printed in USA



Printed on Recyclable Paper

6051M