



KENDALL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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May is American Stroke Month

Kendall County Health Department is joining the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association in promoting May as American Stroke Month. Stroke affects people of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds; this year's focus is on women, African Americans, stroke survivors and their caregivers, and people with high blood pressure.

Stroke is our nation's No. 3 killer and leading cause of serious, long-term disability. It is estimated that the United States will spend an estimated \$73.6 billion dollars in medical costs and lost productivity caused by strokes.

Some people have a higher risk of stroke. About 55,000 more women than men suffer a stroke each year. African Americans have almost twice the risk of a first-ever stroke compared to Caucasians. People with high blood pressure (140/90+) have about twice the risk of a stroke as people with blood pressure under 120/80.

To help determine if you or a family member is at risk for a stroke, the Kendall County Health Department offers the following checklist to follow:

If you answer "yes" to two or more of these statements, you may want to speak to your health care provider about your risk for a stroke.

- **Age:** Are you a man over 45 or a woman over 55 years old?
- **Family History:** Has your father or brother had a heart attack before age 55 or your mother or sister had one before age 65?
- **Medical History:** Do you have coronary artery disease, or have had a heart attack? Have you had a stroke? Do you have an abnormal heartbeat?
- **Tobacco Smoke:** Do you smoke, or live or work with people who smoke every day?
- **Total Cholesterol and HDL cholesterol:** Is your total cholesterol level 240mg/dL or higher?
- **Blood Pressure:** Is your blood pressure higher than 140/90, or have you been told your blood pressure is too high?
- **Physical Inactivity:** Do you get less than 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week?
- **Excess Body Weight:** Are you 20 pounds or more overweight?
- **Diabetes:** Do you have diabetes or take medicine to control your blood sugar.

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Warning Signs

It is important to understand the warning signs of stroke. Often times the warning signs go unnoticed and people wait too long before receiving help. Stroke is extremely treatable in the first three hours. Every minute that goes by without help can greatly affect your chances of survival or quality of life following a stroke. The Kendall County Health Department encourages you to learn these warning signs:

- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause
- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, typically on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination

If you or a loved one experiences any of these symptoms please call 9-1-1 immediately, even if you are unsure because every minute counts!

Call (630) 553-9100 or visit our website at, www.kendallhealth.org for more information.