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SENIOR SUCCESS | HEALTH

Lessen the Risk of Strokes

The risks of experiencing a life-threatening stroke increases with age.

In fact, the National Center for Biotechnology Information estimates that 70% of victims are aged 65 or older. While the risks associated with age are out of your control, there are numerous lifestyle changes you can make to lessen your chances of experiencing one.

Do you know the signs that you or a loved one is suffering from a stroke? The National Institutes on Aging encourages us to become familiar with these symptoms and call 911 immediately if you are experiencing them:

• Sudden confusion or inability to speak coherently;

• Numbness or weakness to the head, arm or leg - especially on one side of the body;

• Problems seeing in one or both eyes; and

• Sudden dizziness or a severe headache occurring with no known cause.

The speed at which you identify a stroke and receive medical help can greatly impact the lasting effects during recovery.

LOWER THE RISKS

The United States Department of Health and Human Services suggests that keeping your blood pressure in the normal range is one of the most important steps to lower your risk of a stroke. Here are a few more actions they recommend. Be physical and eat healthy to maintain a healthy weight. Quit smoking. Regulate cholesterol and blood sugar levels and treat conditions of heart disease.

PROACTIVE HEALTH CARE

Without regular checkups, it's impossible to understand your stroke risks. Take control of your health by committing to a proactive routine with your primary physician. With a few simple tests, they can discover your likelihood of an episode and offer tips on how to resolve the risks. Harvard Health Publishing says one such screening, a carotid ultrasound, is efficient in identifying a buildup of cholesterol-filled plaque in arteries in the neck.

These are the vessels that deliver blood to the brain and can cause a stroke once blocked. Doctors may also determine stroke-inducing heart problems by simply listening with a stethoscope. They will be watching for irregular rates or rhythms.

LEARN FAMILY HISTORY

While you can change your lifestyle to promote healthier living, your genetics may mean you are predisposed to the risks of a stroke. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says conditions like heart disease, sickle-cell disease and heredity attributing to unhealthy choices, can all be passed down genetically.

Understanding your risk due to family history can show you the seriousness of your risks and improve your efforts to make changes to maintain your health.



SENIOR SUCCESS | FOOD

Change Your Diet

It's never too late to make lifestyle changes that positively impact our health. As people age, diets become increasingly important to lessen the risks of disease by eating nutritious items.

If you're unfamiliar with what it takes to create a well-balanced menu, you should start by asking your general practitioner for a referral to a quality nutritionist

Based on your health and diet, they can recommend a plan that works specifically for you. Check with your health care provider to ensure their services are covered by your insurance. Here are some basic tips to get you started toward clean eating from the National Council on Aging.

USE MYPLATE

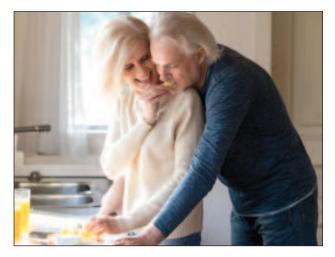
Do you remember the food pyramid that the United States Department of Agriculture introduced to America in 1992? While it served as an efficient guide to help people understand the important nutrients they needed, in 2011, the MyPlate system was created.

While it stays true to the importance of fruits, vegetables and protein, the new guide makes it simpler to visualize how much of each should be eaten. Check it out before changing up your diet toward better health.

VARIETY OF NUTRIENTS

In addition to sticking to the proper serving levels of different nutrients, the National Council on Aging also recommends that a plate should contain bright, colored foods as they contain important vitamins.

Make sure to check the Nutrition Facts label and ensure it is packed with nutrients and low on fat, sugar and sodium. Discuss your new eating plan with your doctor or



nutritionist to discover what your body needs and what you should avoid based on your health.

STICK TO RECOMMENDED SERVINGS

Even healthy foods should be eaten with a serving limit in mind. Check out these new guidelines from the American Heart Association for people over 60 years of age: five servings of vegetables per day; four servings of fruit per day; and eight to nine servings of meat per week.

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SENIOR SUCCESS | RECREATION

Activities With Limited Mobility

While there are many health disorders that can affect your mobility and energy, you shouldn't be discouraged from engaging in more stationary activities.

If it's difficult to stay physically active, challenging your mind can have great health benefits to your cognitive health.

According to the National Institutes on Aging, simple activities like reading, photography and learning a new skill can improve your memory and ability to think. If you're struggling to find activities to occupy your time, consider partaking in some of these beneficial activities.

READING

A great way to spend time indoors during the crisp autumn temperatures is in the company of a good book. Whether you're aiming to improve your knowledge on a subject or inspiring creativity by delving into a nonfiction read, the organization Reading Partners suggests reading is a proven way to reduce stress, combat mental decline and increase empathy. The mental benefits of enjoying a story or article are something to take advantage of.

VOLUNTEER AT A LOCAL CHARITY

Contributing monetary donations is a great way to feel a sense of accomplishment and help a worthy cause. Volunteering your time can be even more beneficial. Look around your community for organizations who need help to enhance their mission. You can look for jobs like serving at a food shelter, reading to children and preparing community events to raise money.

PLAY CHALLENGING GAMES

Challenge and improve your mental skills by participating in puzzle solving games. You can



typically find difficult crossword puzzles or sudoku challenges within your daily newspaper. When using a pencil to complete these activities is too difficult, consider investing in a touchscreen tablet and download challenging apps that are easier to play.



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SENIOR SUCCESS | LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Benefits of Assisted Living

Requiring the help of others can be a hard reality to accept. Many seniors may view moving to an assisted living center as giving up their independence. However, these specialized facilities offer people much of your familiar lifestyle with the security that someone is watching over your health. Consider these benefits they provide for the next new and exciting chapter in your life

CAMARADERIE WITH RESIDENTS

Social isolation can be a devastating condition for seniors. In fact, the American Association of Retired Persons offers these sobering statistics to consider.

• 17% of adults aged 65 and older feel isolated.

• 26% are at an increased risk of early death due to the feeling of loneliness.

• 46% of women aged 75 and older live alone.

An assisted living facility helps maintain a social life as community events are held to stimulate physical and mental health. Seniors can participate in exercise programs, exciting games and build relationships with staff and fellow residents.

CONSTANT HEALTH

You may not feel like you need



constant supervision at this stage in your life, but as you continue to age, it's likely your capabilities will falter and make daily activities more difficult. Deciding to commit to an assisted living community before this occurs, allows you to become familiar with the staff and professionals you will later rely on. They are highly trained to offer 24/7 care in a professional and dignified manner.

MORE FREE TIME

One reason seniors decide to move into assisted living is when the demand of maintenance for their family home becomes too

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Medicare Annual OCTOBER Enrollment Period 15

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much. Once you downsize and sell your previous property, you gain more free time to use for fun activities or to enhance your health.

HEALTHY AND DELICIOUS MEALS

Cooking can become increasingly difficult due to conditions like arthritis, but it's still important to eat healthy. Most assisted living facilities offer delicious meals which include the nutrients your body needs to age gracefully. Dining centers also give residents the opportunity to enjoy the company of friends as they share an elegant meal.

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