



TBH Focus

Body | *Live With Your Brain in Mind*

- Simple choices we make about how we live can affect our brain health, both in the short-term and in years to come.
- How much sleep we get, the medications we take, and other routine decisions can have a significant impact on daily memory.
- Other aspects of daily life—how we take care of our health overall, manage chronic conditions, or protect ourselves from head injury—can be important factors in future brain health.

The TBH Science

Not only is stroke (an interruption of blood flow to the brain) a major risk factor for dementia, it's the third leading cause of disability among adults in the United States. But there's good news: As devastating as stroke can be, research shows that it's also a health hazard that's largely preventable. For example, one large study at the Harvard School of Public Health found that simple measures such as eating a balanced diet, getting regular aerobic exercise, and not smoking lower the risk of stroke by as much as 80 percent.

A major reason these simple lifestyle changes impact stroke risk is because they can help to drive down high blood pressure (hypertension), which is responsible for one-third of all risk of stroke. So besides living healthfully, it's important that we keep an eye on our blood pressure by having it checked regularly—even it means popping in to a pharmacy that has a blood pressure machine. It's also vital to learn the warning signs of stroke, so that it can be treated quickly: This is especially true of *ischemic* stroke, in which blood vessels that service a particular part of the brain become blocked; studies show that if an ischemic stroke is treated within three hours, brain tissue can be saved. (The other type of stroke, called *hemorrhagic*, which occurs when a blood vessel breaks and floods the brain with blood, is trickier to treat, although a swift response is still vital.)

You Will Need

- “Stroke Awareness” worksheets (see Resources)



- Introduce the activity. Use the TBH Focus and TBH Science to talk about the damaging effects of stroke on brain health.
 - Explain how simple lifestyle changes can lower the risk of stroke. Focus on healthy eating, regular exercise, and for those who smoke, kicking the habit. Invite group to ask questions and discuss.
 - Teach how to evaluate someone who may be having a stroke. Use the “Is It a Stroke?” worksheets to teach the three warning signs.
 - Have the group discuss what they would do if they suspect that they or someone else is having a stroke.
-



- Introduce the activity. Use the TBH Focus and TBH Science to talk about the damaging effects of stroke on brain health.
 - Teach how to evaluate someone who may be having a stroke. Use the “Is It a Stroke?” worksheets to teach the three warning signs.
-



Stroke is the third leading cause of disability in the United States. The good news is, the quicker stroke is treated, the less likely it is to cause severe or permanent damage. Here's how to spot a stroke in progress:

1. Ask the person to **smile**. A lop-sided or drooping smile is a sign of stroke.
 2. Ask the person to **raise both arms**. Look for asymmetry in the height of his or her hands.
 3. Ask the person to **repeat a simple sentence**. Listen for slurring or other speech irregularities.
-



Expert Opportunity

Invite a nurse or other medical professional to do blood pressure screenings during the presentation.



Resources

See the Resources section of your online Toolkit for all worksheets, links, and additional materials for this activity.