

## **STROKES AND STROKE PREVENTION**

### **Definitions**

- **Strokes** - Ischemic brain attack - Cerebrovascular accident (CVA) - Means damage and death of brain cells due to lack of blood flow.
- **TIA** - Transient Ischemic attacks – is symptoms of strokes that recover completely often within minutes but in less than 24 hours.
- **Silent Strokes** - the appearance of stroke related brain damage on imaging studies of the brain like MRI or CT scans. It is often due to blockages on the small arteries in the brain. (small vessel disease.)

### **Things to watch or do on stroke patients**

1. **Weight Control, exercise and diet** - These might be your best weapons! Healthy, fresh, (not processed) diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low-dairy, low carbohydrate and limited alcohol consumption. (No more than 2 drinks/day males and 1/day females.)
2. **Blood pressure (BP)** treatments have been the most important factor in the decrease of large strokes in the U.S.. Blood pressure needs treatment if it is in average, or frequently above 140/90. If you have “episodic” or white coat syndrome BP elevations treatment is also likely needed.
3. **Lipids abnormalities** - Adults over 20 - lipids should be checked every few years, and more often as you age. Different types and options on treatment are available; Good diet is critical. Statins are safe for the majority of patients. For mild to moderate risk patients, keep LDL <100, higher risk keep LDL <70.
4. **Diabetes** - Is a huge risk factor. Need to be treated aggressively.
5. **Cardiac problems** - Some types of cardiac rhythm problems specifically atrial fibrillation and other conditions causing weak hearts increase stroke risk.
6. **Carotid** or vertebral artery disease - The main arteries that carry blood to the brain when obstructed can cause strokes. They can be monitored by a number of different tests.
7. Other illnesses - Many other conditions can increase stroke risk, Flu vaccines are recommended as well as blood monitor for certain conditions.

### **Medicines and supplements**

1. Aspirin - Usually the first line of treatment for those who are not allergic. Usually an 81mg, or 325mg non-coated aspirin unless it causes stomach upset (coating of aspirin seem to increase the risk of aspirin resistance.)
2. Clopidrogel (Plavix) - 75mg. /day. Antiplatelet agent.
3. Dipyridamol/aspirin combination Aggrenox.
4. Anticoagulants - Warfarin (Coumadin); and several other newer agents.
5. Statins - Also play an important role.

\*\* Socialize, sleep well, keep the brain active and family close. Treat your partner well and have fun!