

# TO YOUR HEALTH

Carleton-Willard Village Out-Patient Clinic

100 Old Billerica Road, Bedford

Volume 21 Number 5 **Happy Mother's Day!**

May 2016

## Stroke: Act **FAST**

*By Susan Cusson, NP*

We all know that stroke is a major cause of death and disability, but how much do you know about strokes??? May is national stroke prevention month. Read on for some myths and facts.

**MYTH:** Stroke cannot be prevented.

**FACT:** Up to 80 percent of strokes are preventable

**MYTH:** There is no treatment for stroke.

**FACT:** At any sign of stroke seek help immediately. Treatment may be available.

**MYTH:** Stroke happens in the heart.

**FACT:** Stroke is a "Brain attack".

**MYTH:** Strokes are rare.

**FACT:** There are nearly 7 million stroke survivors in the U.S. Stroke is the 5th leading cause of death in the U.S.

**MYTH:** Strokes are not hereditary.

**FACT:** Family history of stroke increases your chance of stroke.

**MYTH:** If stroke symptoms go away, you don't have to see a doctor.

**FACT:** Temporary stroke symptoms are called transient ischemic attacks (TIA). They are warning signs prior to actual stroke and need to be taken seriously.

May is National  
Stroke  
Awareness Month



Stop Stroke-Act FAST-Spread HOPE

## What are the signs of a stroke?

- **Sudden** severe headache
- **Sudden** loss of vision or blurry vision
- **New weakness** or numbness on one side of the body or face
- **Sudden** trouble walking or loss of balance
- **Difficulty** speaking or slurred speech

THINK **F A S T**

**F - Face** Does the face droop on one side when the person smiles?

**A - Arm** After raising both arms, does one of the arms drift downwards?

**S - Speech** After repeating a simple phrase, does the person's speech sound slurred or strange?

**T - Time** If any or all of the above are observed seek immediate medical assistance.



## What can you do to prevent a stroke?

Knowing the risk factors is an important start. Some risk factors can be modified, others can't. High blood pressure, diet, activity level, cholesterol, weight, diabetes and smoking are all modifiable risk factors. According to research released in the April issue of the journal Stroke, people who more closely followed the DASH diet not only had lower blood pressure but also lower risk of stroke. The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet is a plant focused diet that emphasizes

fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, poultry, fish, and nuts. The diet has long been touted for its ability to lower blood pressure, which is one of the leading risk factors for stroke. It is thought that the low levels of saturated fat and cholesterol and the high level of antioxidants from plant-based foods may discourage the buildup of fatty plaque inside arteries.

Atrial fibrillation, a common irregular heart rhythm, is also considered a modifiable risk factor. Atrial Fibrillation (AFib) is a growing health problem, an under-treated disease, and a significant risk factor for stroke. Despite concrete scientific evidence that oral anticoagulants reduce strokes by over 60%, only about half of eligible individuals receive the appropriate treatment ([www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org)). Anticoagulation with warfarin (coumadin) increases the risk of bleeding and requires close monitoring with blood tests. Newer anticoagulants (ie Eliquis, Pradaxa and Xarelto) still carry a risk of bleeding but do not require blood tests. Warfarin has been around for a long time (since the 1950s) and has readily available reversal agents should there be sudden uncontrolled bleeding. Until recently, there was no way to quickly reverse the effects of these newer agents in the setting of a sudden hemorrhage. In October 2015 the FDA approved one reversal agent and more are in clinical trials that hope to be approved soon. If you or someone you know has atrial fibrillation, talk with a healthcare provider about options to reduce your risk of stroke.

### Health Education Lecture

“Understanding Heart Disease”

Dr. Jonathan Green is a Cardiologist who practices at

Emerson Cardiovascular Associates.

Come learn about risk factors, drug therapy, lifestyle recommendations and when to see a cardiologist.

Join us Monday, May 16 10:30—11:30 am  
Auditorium Center and Left



### Mosquitoes & Ticks



While most of the news about Zika has been focused on potential birth defects in babies born to women suspected of having the virus, it also poses a risk to older adults. Researchers have been studying a link between the mosquito-borne virus and Guillain-Barre syndrome, a post-infection complication that can lead to temporary paralysis in adults. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently confirmed that link based on two U.S. cases of Guillain-Barre linked to Zika.

The risk of getting Zika from a mosquito is low in this area but the risk of acquiring Lyme disease from a tick is not. Whether you're travelling to a high risk country or staying local, it's prudent to protect yourself against potential illnesses carried by insects. Wearing light colored long sleeves and pants outdoors is advised. There are also several products on the market that provide effective protection against both mosquitoes and ticks. Products containing 20 percent picaridin or 25 percent deet are most effective. A chart comparing products can be found at [www.consumerreports.org](http://www.consumerreports.org).

### BEDFORD DRUG PICK-UP

**The Bedford Police will pick-up expired and unused medications on:**

**Friday, May 13, 2016**

**You can drop off any unused/expired Prescription ONLY**

**medication at the Clinic between 8:30 am and 12 noon.**

*The Clinic can only accept medications during these times and on the date of pick-up.*

**You can also drop off unwanted medications at the Bedford Police Department. They have a kiosk in the entrance vestibule available 24 hours a day. The location is 2 Mudge Way.**