

Diabetes Can Lead To A Stroke: Learn The Signs And Risks

(NAPSA)—Diabetes carries well-known risks such as amputations and blindness, but it also significantly increases your risk for a stroke. People with diabetes are two to four times more likely to suffer a stroke. In fact, two out of three people with diabetes actually die from a stroke or heart disease.

A stroke occurs when blood supply to part of your brain is blocked and brain tissue is damaged, potentially causing paralysis, problems speaking or thinking and emotional problems. Aside from diabetes, other factors that put you at risk for a stroke include smoking, a family history of stroke, a previous stroke, high blood pressure and abnormal cholesterol levels.

Since strokes often strike without warning, it is important for people with diabetes to know the symptoms and how to seek help. Warning signs include:

- Weakness or numbness on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion or difficulty understanding
- Difficulty speaking
- Dizziness, loss of balance, or difficulty walking
- Trouble seeing through one or both eyes
- Double vision
- Severe headache.

Call 911 if you experience any of these symptoms, as prompt treatment can help prevent permanent brain damage. If one or



more of these signs occur but then disappear, you may have had a transient ischemic attack (TIA), which may put you at risk for a future stroke.

You can lower your risk of having a stroke by making small lifestyle changes, including quitting smoking, adopting a healthier diet and increasing physical activity. For people with diabetes, monitoring blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels is essential. Those at high risk for a stroke should work with their health care provider to determine the best way to reduce their risk.

The American Diabetes Association and the American College of Cardiology are leading an educational effort called Make the Link! Diabetes, Heart Disease and Stroke to help reduce deaths associated with diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Resources are available to help you learn more about making this important link. For more information, visit www.diabetes.org/makethelink or call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383).