

Lincoln Stroke Partnership

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: April 25, 2008

Contact: Amy Goldman, DPT
402-483-9620

Educational Event — Free and Open to the Public

Life After Stroke: New support for survivors and their families

Thursday, May 15, 2008

7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

BryanLGH East, Plaza Conference Center

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States and a leading cause of disability. Find out how Lincoln and the State of Nebraska are working to improve stroke care and outcomes.

Featured speakers include James Bobenhouse, MD, with Neurology Associates; and a recent stroke survivor, who will share his inspiring story.

Learn how you can participate in a new citywide Peer Visitation program — a new avenue of support for stroke survivors and their families.

The “Life After Stroke” event is a collaborative effort between:

- The Lincoln Stroke Partnership
- BryanLGH Health System
- Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
- Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center

###

Know the warning signs of a stroke – think “FAST”

Face: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

Arm: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

Speech: Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Does the speech sound slurred or strange?

Time: If you observe any of these signs, it's time to call 9-1-1 or get to the nearest stroke center or hospital.

FACTS ABOUT STROKE

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States and in Nebraska. It is also one of the leading causes of adult disability.

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts. As a result, part of the brain does not get the blood it needs and begins to die. The longer the blood flow is cut off to the brain, the greater the damage.

ACT FAST

Stroke is a medical emergency. Every minute counts when someone is having a stroke. Go to the emergency room immediately when any of the signs of stroke are noticed or suspected. Immediate treatment can save someone's life and prevent or reduce disability.

Reducing Stroke Risk

Everyone has some stroke risk. A few stroke risk factors are beyond your control, such as being over age 55, being a male, being an African-American, having diabetes, and having a family history of stroke. If you have one of these risk factors, it is even more important that you learn about the lifestyle and medical changes you can make to prevent a stroke.

Medical stroke risk factors include:

Previous stroke, previous episode of transient ischemic attack (TIA) or mini stroke, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease, atrial fibrillation and carotid artery disease. These medical risk factors can be controlled. Talk with your doctor about what will work best for you.

Lifestyle stroke risk factors include:

Smoking, being overweight and drinking too much alcohol. You can control these lifestyle risk factors by quitting smoking, exercising regularly, watching what and how much you eat and limiting alcohol consumption.

National Stroke Association's Stroke Prevention Guidelines

1. **Know your blood pressure.** If it is elevated, work with your doctor to keep it under control. High blood pressure is a leading cause of stroke. Have your blood pressure checked at least once each year – more often if you have a history of high blood pressure.

2. **Find out if you have atrial fibrillation (AF).** If you have AF, work with your doctor to manage it. Atrial fibrillation can cause blood to collect in the chambers of your heart.

This blood can form clots and cause a stroke. Your doctor can detect AF by carefully checking your pulse.

3. If you smoke, stop. Smoking doubles the risk for stroke. If you stop smoking today, your risk for stroke will begin to decrease.

4. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. Having one drink each day may lower your risk for stroke (provided that there is no other medical reason you should avoid alcohol). Remember that alcohol is a drug - it can interact with other drugs you are taking, and alcohol is harmful if taken in large doses. If you don't drink, don't start.

5. Know your cholesterol number. If it is high, work with your doctor to control it. Lowering your cholesterol may reduce your risk for stroke. High cholesterol can also indirectly increase stroke risk by putting you at greater risk of heart disease - an important stroke risk factor. Often times, high cholesterol can be controlled with diet and exercise; some individuals may require medication.

6. Control your diabetes. If you are diabetic, follow your doctor's recommendations carefully. Having diabetes puts you at an increased risk for stroke. Your doctor can prescribe a nutrition program, lifestyle changes and medicine that can help control your diabetes.

7. Include exercise in the activities you enjoy in your daily routine. A brisk walk, swim or other exercise activity for as little as 30 minutes a day can improve your health in many ways, and may reduce your risk for stroke.

8. Enjoy a lower sodium (salt), lower fat diet. By cutting down on sodium and fat in your diet, you may be able to lower your blood pressure and, most importantly, lower your risk for stroke.

9. Ask your doctor if you have circulation problems. If so, work with your doctor to control them. Fatty deposits can block the arteries which carry blood from your heart to your brain. Sickle cell disease, severe anemia, or other diseases can cause stroke if left untreated.

10. If you have any stroke symptoms, seek immediate medical attention. For more information on stroke please visit:

<http://www.stroke.org/>

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/stroke/toc.html>

<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/>

<http://www.americanstroke.org/>

<http://www.stroke.org>

<http://www.nebraskastroke.org>

<http://www.strikeoutstroke.org/>

<http://www.strokeassociation.org/>