

# Jeni's Health & Fitness Tips

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Hi Everyone!

As our community ages so does the prevalence of disease associated with aging, such as stroke. It is important to make healthy lifestyle choices as a preventative measure to avoid such diseases. A stroke is caused when an artery supplying blood to part of the brain becomes blocked or bursts. This deprives that part of the brain of oxygen resulting in damage in brain tissue.

There are a few lifestyle steps we can follow to reduce the risk of stroke such as:

- Be a non-smoker
- Eat a healthy diet
- Maintain healthy body weight
- Drink alcohol in moderation
- Monitor and control blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol levels
- Exercise a minimum of 30 minutes most days
- Manage stress and get a good nights sleep

There are five major signs that someone is experiencing a stroke. It is important to recognise these as rapid medical intervention can prevent permanent brain damage. These are:

- Numbness or weakness of face or a limb
- Confusion, difficulty speaking or understanding
- Difficulty seeing in one or both eyes
- Difficulty walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Severe headache

It is essential to call for emergency medical help if anyone is experiencing these symptoms.

There are also mini strokes or transient ischemic attacks. Although these produce stroke like symptoms they do not cause lasting damage. However recognising and treating these can reduce the risk of a major stroke. Symptoms are the same but temporary and the short duration does not result in permanent brain injury.

If you suspect someone is having a stroke, there are three commands you can give them known as the Cincinnati Pre-hospital Stroke Scale. If someone has trouble with these simple commands call an ambulance immediately and advise that you suspect they are having a stroke. The three commands are:

1. Smile
2. Raise both arms
3. Speak a simple sentence

Remember, if you make healthy lifestyle choices, you will be less likely to experience a stroke, or other diseases associated with aging, such as type II diabetes. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of a healthy diet and plenty of exercise. When you book into an exercise course make it your priority to attend regularly.

For a healthy weekend away, our next health retreat will be in April 2010. Details are attached.

Yours in health,

*Jeni*

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