

Community Health Coalition, Inc.



Healthy People
2020

Improving the health of Durham
& NC communities since 1989

Community Health Coalition, Inc.

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Healthy Sunday Topic: Stroke and Women's Health

STROKE

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in America and a leading cause of adult disability. Women are disproportionately affected by stroke because each year, 55,000 more women have a stroke than men. Unfortunately, research shows that very few people know what a stroke is and how to recognize when stroke is happening. It is important to learn more about stroke, how to prevent a stroke from happening to you, and learning the signs and symptoms to help save the life of your loved ones. A stroke happens when blood flow to an area of the brain is cut off. Brain cells are deprived of oxygen and begin to die. A stroke can cause you to permanently lose speech, movement and memory.

Symptoms

SUDDEN numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body

SUDDEN confusion, trouble speaking, or understanding

SUDDEN trouble seeing in one or both eyes

SUDDEN trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination

SUDDEN severe headache with no known cause

Call 9-1-1 immediately if you observe any of these symptoms



Dr. Cedric Bright, MD, Assistant Dean of Admissions, Director of the Office of Special Programs at UNC School of Medicine states, "You are the most important person in the control of your health, taking responsibility for your diet, physical activity, and monitoring your blood pressure and blood sugars can decrease your chances of having a stroke or other unwanted complication. Remember the wise words of Ben Franklin, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure".

Remember your ABCs

Avoid or stop smoking

Be active and exercise regularly

Control your blood pressure and cholesterol

WOMEN'S HEALTH

The PAP Smear

The PAP smear has decreased cervical cancer by more than 50% in the last 30 years from 14.8 per 100,000 in 1978 to 6.7 per 100,000 in 2011. But today, we are being told they are not necessary every year. What is the reason for this?

The PAP smear is a screening test for cancer of the cervix, period. It cannot test for any other cancers or infections. HOWEVER an HPV test can be added to the PAP. We now know that high risk HPV, which is a sexually transmitted virus, is responsible for over 90% of cervical cancers. Most women are exposed to this virus, usually early in their sexual life and most will clear the virus with their immune systems. Because prolonged exposure to the virus increases the possibility of developing abnormal cells, we now include HPV testing for all women over 30 at the time of the PAP smear. If she is HPV positive, additional testing may be recommended.

It is now recommended that a PAP is not necessary yearly in women who have had three consecutive normal PAPs and are HPV negative. This is because a woman who has been HPV negative has very little chance of developing abnormal cells. In women under 30, every three years is recommended and every 5 years over 30. Women who no longer have a cervix because of a hysterectomy for noncancerous reasons and women over 65 may discontinue having PAP smears.



Dr. Sheila Allison, MD., Gynecologist at Southpoint Medicine and Women's Health Associates says, **“You still need to see your provider yearly for a pelvic exam.** Also, the insurance companies are still covering annual PAP so I respect the wishes of my patients and will do a PAP if they prefer. In this climate of decreasing medical costs, annual PAP may not always be covered! As always, condoms protect against sexually transmitted infections including HPV.”

For More Information

National Stroke Association at www.stroke.org or 800-787-6537

American Heart Association at www.heart.org or 800-242-8721

Everyday Health at www.everydayhealth.com or 646-728-9500

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Health Tip is a message from Community Health Coalition, Inc. and is written in partnership with Central Carolina Black Nurses' Council Inc., The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity, and Duke Regional Hospital.

REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!