

Dr. Likosky is a stroke specialist, board-certified in neurology and internal medicine. He has been in practice at Evergreen since 2000.



“Stroke is the third leading cause of death in our community. If everyone with high blood pressure were to get it under control, the number of strokes would drop by 40 to 50 percent.”

David Likosky, MD *Evergreen Stroke Team*

Stroke

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts. When that happens, parts of the brain are deprived of oxygen, destroying the brain cells vital for speech, movement, thought and all the processes that keep us alive.

WARNING SIGNS

If you or someone you're with develops any of these stroke symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately.

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or trouble understanding speech
- Sudden trouble seeing with one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking; dizziness or loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

THE EVERGREEN STROKE TEAM

When it comes to stroke, it's critical that treatment begin as quickly as possible. Clot-busting drugs such as tPA (tissue plasminogen activator) can dissolve blood clots and reduce disability, but they have to be administered within three-to-six hours after the stroke.

The stroke team at Evergreen is available 24/7 to provide quick diagnosis in the Emergency Department and begin treatment right away with a full range of drug and surgical interventions. The stroke team consists of an emergency physician, an internal medicine specialist, a neurologist and a radiologist.

RISK FACTORS

- The older a person is, the higher the risk of stroke.
- If a close relative has had a stroke or heart attack, you may be at higher risk of stroke.
- African Americans tend to have a higher risk of stroke.
- Smokers have more than twice the risk of stroke compared to nonsmokers.
- The risk of stroke goes up as body weight increases. This is especially true for people who carry extra body fat around the waist.
- High blood pressure/diabetes/high cholesterol can cause damage to blood vessels, leading to stroke.

PREVENTION | LOWER YOUR RISK

There are many things you can do to reduce your risk of stroke:

- Eat a healthy diet. Healthy food habits can help you reduce three risk factors for stroke – high cholesterol, high blood pressure and excess body weight.
- Keep your blood pressure under control.
- Keep your LDL cholesterol less than 100 and HDL cholesterol greater than 50.
- Stop smoking.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- If you're a diabetic, control your blood sugars.
- Lose weight if you are more than 20 percent over recommended levels.
- Engage in physical activity for at least 30 minutes several days a week.

SCREENING

For people without symptoms, there are no good screening tests for predicting stroke. People of all ages should be periodically screened for risk factors for stroke, including diabetes, high blood pressure, abnormal blood cholesterol levels and being overweight/obese.