



News from REGARDS

REasons for Geographic And Racial Differences in Stroke

Your Stroke Risk May Differ by How Long You Sleep



In our REGARDS volunteers, we found that stroke risk is different for black and white men depending on how long they sleep.

New data from REGARDS found that black men who slept less than six hours per night, were less likely to develop a stroke compared to black men who slept 7-9 hours. On

the flip side, white men who slept nine or more hours a night were more likely to have a stroke than white men who slept 7-9 hours. There wasn't a relationship of sleep length to stroke in black or white women.

These results suggest that short sleep may be "good" for stroke for black men, and long sleep may be "bad" for stroke for white men. So, sleep length may have different consequences for you depending on your race and sex. More research is needed to understand why this might be. In the meantime, no matter how little or how much you sleep, keep a watch on stroke risk factors like your high blood pressure, diabetes and smoking.

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If you would like to contact our Operations Center, the toll-free number is:

1-888-REGARDS
(1-888-734-2738)

The Operations Center is open

Monday– Friday
8:00am–5:00pm CDT.

If you reach our answering machine, please leave a message and we will return your call.

Visit us at
www.regardsstudy.org

You can also email us at
regards@uab.edu

What You Eat is an Important Risk Factor for High Blood Pressure

Our researchers just looked at what things were related to REGARDS volunteers developing high blood pressure between their first and second in-home visit. We found that diet is the biggest reason why more African-Americans develop high blood pressure than whites. Eating too much

- fried and processed meats
- eggs, organ meat
- added fats and sugar
- breads
- sugary drinks and
- salt

puts African-American men and women at higher risk.

Preventing high blood pressure is important for reducing the black-white differences in the risk of having stroke and heart disease. We've known for a long time that African Americans have a higher risk of high blood pressure than whites. Now we know more about why.

The best way to treat high blood pressure is to prevent it through healthy diet, exercise and weight control. But if you already have high blood pressure, do these same things and take any medications you have been prescribed. Remember that high blood pressure does not cause symptoms, so you need to have your blood pressure checked to know if it is in control.



Exercise and Pain

Exercising when you're in pain can be hard. You might think that you should rest until your pain disappears. But depending on the type of pain you're experiencing, exercise can help reduce your pain and improve your mood. Most people living with chronic pain can exercise safely. In fact, research has shown that exercise can reduce one's risk of lower back pain.

Follow these tips for exercising with pain:

- **Pace yourself.** Begin your program slowly with low-intensity exercises and work up from there.
- **Talk to your doctor.** Pain usually doesn't go away overnight, so talk with your health care provider about how long it may take before you feel better and about what exercises you can do safely.
- **Know which exercises to do.** Endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility exercises are all helpful, so doing a combination of exercises may be best.
- **Don't overdo it.** Listen to your body. Avoid overexerting yourself when you feel good. If you have pain or swelling in a specific area, switch your focus to another area for a couple of days.

This information was provided by the National Institute of Aging. Learn more at www.nia.nih.gov.

Did You Know These Facts About High Blood Pressure?



High blood pressure is very common in older people. It is a major health problem. If left untreated, it can lead to stroke, heart disease, eye problems, kidney failure and more.

Make sure you know the facts about high blood pressure and its treatment:

- High blood pressure may not make you feel sick, but it is serious. See a doctor to treat it.
- You can lower your blood pressure by changing your day-to-day habits and by taking medicine, if needed.
- If you take high blood pressure medicine, making some lifestyle changes may help lower the dose you need.
- If you take blood pressure medicine and your blood pressure goes down, it means medicine and lifestyle changes are working. If another doctor asks if you have high blood pressure, the answer is, "Yes, but it is being treated."
- Tell your doctor about all the drugs you take. Don't forget to mention over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and dietary supplements. They may affect your blood pressure. They also can change how well your blood pressure medicine works.
- Blood pressure pills should be taken at the same time each day. If you miss a dose, do not double the dose the next day.
- Get up slowly from a seated or lying position and stand for a bit before walking. This lets your blood pressure adjust before walking to prevent dizziness, fainting, or a fall.

Learn more about high blood pressure at www.nia.nih.gov.

NO MORE EXCUSES!

Overcome Exercise Barriers

Many older adults know they should be more active, but find it hard to fit exercise into their lives.

CHECK OUT THESE TIPS

to learn how you can stop making excuses and get moving to improve your health.



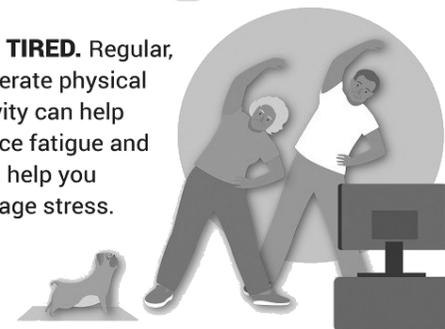
NO TIME. Exercise first thing in the morning or combine physical activity with a task that's already part of your day.

TOO BORING. Do things you enjoy and try new activities to keep exercise interesting and fun.



TOO EXPENSIVE. Wear a pair of comfortable, non-skid shoes for walking and use soup cans or water bottles to strength train.

TOO TIRED. Regular, moderate physical activity can help reduce fatigue and even help you manage stress.



This infographic was provided by the National Institute on Aging. For more information visit www.go4life.nia.nih.gov.