

May is:

- Mother's Day – May 12th
- American Stroke Awareness / High Blood Pressure Education Month
- Arthritis Awareness Month
- Better Hearing & Speech Month
- Clean Air Month
- Mental Health Month
- National Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month
- National Physical Fitness & Sports Month/Week (May 1st – 7th)
- National Women's Health Week (May 12th – 18th)
- Memorial Day – May 27th
- National Senior Health Day – May 29th

In His Service,



AAS Ministry

'Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.'

Ephesians 6:2-3



May is National Stroke Awareness Month

In May alone, some 65,000 Americans will experience a stroke with many unaware that they were even at risk. Less than a third will arrive in the emergency room within three hours, the optimal time period for better outcomes.

May marks National Stroke Awareness Month, and this year the National Stroke Association is turning the spotlight on the 10 modifiable risk factors that account for 90% of strokes globally. Hypertension remains the single most important modifiable risk factor, accounting for nearly 48% of strokes. With eight in 10 people experiencing their first stroke having hypertension, getting your blood pressure checked is an important first step in controlling your stroke risk.

Research has shown that unhealthy behaviors such as physical inactivity, poor diet, and smoking have an adverse effect on health and increase your stroke risk. For example, smokers have an increased risk of stroke, up to two to four times, compared to a nonsmoker or those that have quit for longer than 10 years.

During National Stroke Awareness Month, the National Stroke Association is urging the public to look at their stroke risk factors, and pledge to make at least one change to reduce their stroke risk.

Here's how much stroke would be reduced if each were eliminated:

- Hypertension 47.9%
- Physical inactivity 35.8%
- Lipids (blood fats) 26.8%
- Poor diet 23.2%
- Obesity 18.6%
- Smoking 12.4%
- Heart causes 9.1%
- Alcohol intake 5.8%
- Stress 5.8%
- Diabetes 3.9%

Beyond reducing your risk for stroke, knowing the signs and symptoms of a stroke are equally important. Every 40 seconds someone in the U.S. has a stroke and around 800,000 people will have a stroke in the United States this year alone.

"Learning how to recognize a stroke is just as important as reducing your risk factors," says Robyn Moore, CEO of the National Stroke Association. "We know that recognition of stroke symptoms leads to receiving medical attention faster, which results in better outcomes. Knowing the signs of stroke, how to prevent it, and how to help others around you, just might save a life."

Sadly, however, fewer than half of 9-1-1 calls for stroke are made within one hour of symptom onset and fewer than half of callers correctly identify stroke as the reason for their call. The acronym FAST is an easy way to identify the most common symptoms of a stroke:

May is National Stroke Awareness Month.



5 SURPRISING FACTS ABOUT HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

What you don't know about high blood pressure could hurt you. High blood pressure affects one in three Americans¹ yet many people with the condition don't know they have it.

Uncontrolled high blood pressure raises the risk for heart disease and stroke, which are leading causes of death in the United States. Fortunately, high blood pressure is treatable and preventable. To lower your risk, get your blood pressure checked regularly and take action to control your blood pressure if it is too high.

1. High blood pressure may be linked to dementia.

Recent studies show that high blood pressure is linked to a higher risk for dementia, a loss of cognitive function.² Timing seems to matter: Some evidence suggests having uncontrolled high blood pressure during midlife (age 45 to 65) creates a higher risk for dementia later in life.³ The takeaway? It's never too early to start thinking about your blood pressure and taking steps to manage it.

2. Young people can have high blood pressure, too.

High blood pressure doesn't just happen to older adults. About one in four men and nearly one in five women age 35 to 44 has high blood pressure.⁴

High blood pressure is a leading cause of stroke, a condition that is on the rise among younger people. Experts think the increased risk for stroke among young adults is a direct result of the rising rates of obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes—conditions that are preventable and treatable.

Younger people should get their blood pressure checked at least once each year. You can get your blood pressure checked at a doctor's office, a pharmacy, or at many grocery stores.

3. High blood pressure usually doesn't have any symptoms.

High blood pressure is sometimes called the "silent killer." Most people with high blood pressure don't have any symptoms, such as sweating or headaches. Because many people feel fine, they don't think they need to get their blood pressure checked. Even if you feel normal, your health may be at risk. Talk to your doctor about your risk for high blood pressure.

4. Many people who have high blood pressure don't know it.

About 11 million U.S. adults with high blood pressure aren't even aware they have it and are not receiving treatment to control their blood pressure.¹ Most people with uncontrolled blood pressure have health insurance and visit a health care provider at least twice a year, but the condition remains undiagnosed, hidden from the doctor and patient.⁵ CDC is working with providers to find patients with high blood pressure who are "hiding in plain sight." Ask your provider what your blood pressure numbers mean and whether they are too high. Stick to your treatment plan and follow your provider's advice if you are diagnosed with high blood pressure.

5. Women and minorities face unique risks when it comes to high blood pressure.

Women with high blood pressure who become pregnant are more likely to have complications during pregnancy than those with normal blood pressure. High blood pressure can harm a mother's kidneys and other organs, and it can cause low birth weight and early delivery. Certain types of birth control can also raise a woman's risk for high blood pressure. Women with high blood pressure who want to become pregnant should work with their health care team to lower their blood pressure before becoming pregnant. African American men and women have higher rates of high blood pressure than any other race or ethnic group.⁴ These individuals are also more likely to be hospitalized for high blood pressure. Experts think this is related to higher rates of obesity, diabetes, and stroke among this group. Lifestyle changes, such as reducing sodium in your diet, getting more physical activity, and reducing stress, can help lower blood pressure.



May Is National Arthritis Awareness Month

May is recognized each year as National Arthritis Awareness Month. Arthritis is a disease that impacts more than 50 million Americans, making it the number one cause of disability in the country. That means 1 in every 5 adults, 300,000 children and countless families are affected by arthritis. These numbers are only going to keep growing—unless we take a stand

The Arthritis Foundation is leading the way to conquer arthritis and its effects through our advocacy efforts at the state level and on Capitol Hill, our cutting-edge scientific research, and our tools and resources that help you live your best life.

The first steps in conquering arthritis are learning the facts, understanding your condition and knowing that help is by your side. Below, you'll find some telling statistics about the current impact of arthritis on the U.S. population, resources to help you learn more about arthritis, and additional information on how you can help and get involved.

Arthritis by the Numbers:

- Nearly 53 million adults have doctor-diagnosed arthritis; that number is expected to grow to 67 million by 2030.
- Almost 300,000 babies, kids and teens have arthritis or a rheumatic condition.
- Arthritis is the nation's No. 1 cause of disability.
- Working-age men and women (ages 18 to 64) with arthritis are less likely to be employed than those of the same age without arthritis.
- 1/3 of working-age people with arthritis have limitations in their ability to work, the type of work they can do or whether they can work part time or full time.
- People with osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis –two major kinds of arthritis – miss a combined 172 million workdays every year.
- Arthritis and related conditions account for more than \$156 billion annually in lost wages and medical expenses.
- There are nearly 1 million hospitalizations each year due to arthritis.
- 57% of adults with heart disease have arthritis.
- 52% of adults with diabetes have arthritis.
- 44% of adults with high blood pressure have arthritis.
- 36% of adults who are obese have arthritis.
- 1/3 of adults with arthritis age 45 and older have either anxiety or depression.

Communication is key at all ages: Learn more during Better Hearing and Speech Month

At least 20 percent of U.S. adults, at some point in their lives, experience significant difficulty in hearing, balance, taste, smell, voice, speech, or language—the research areas of the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD). These challenges can compromise physical and emotional health and affect the social, educational, vocational, and recreational aspects of life.

To raise awareness about disorders related to hearing, voice, speech, or language, the NIDCD joins the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and other organizations in observing Better Hearing and Speech Month each May. This year's Better Hearing and Speech Month theme is "Communication Across the Lifespan."

Hearing loss and other communication disorders can affect people at any age. For example, hearing loss can be present at birth or develop over time, and voice, speech, or language disorders can affect many, including children with autism spectrum disorder, people who stutter, and adults who use their voices a lot in their jobs, such as teachers and performers. The NIDCD supports a wide range of research to help develop effective diagnostic and treatment strategies relevant to communication throughout the lifespan.

Hearing loss and voice, speech, and language disorders can be particularly challenging for young children and older adults. Hearing problems in children, for example, can delay the development of voice, speech, and language skills, and children with developmental speech and language problems are at risk for learning disabilities and for psychosocial problems that emerge during adolescence or adulthood. The NIDCD provides information and a checklist on hearing and communicative development to help parents determine if their baby has a hearing problem or has speech or language delays. Early intervention can be key to helping children with communication disorders reach their full potential.

Some communication disorders are associated with other conditions; for example, aphasia, a disorder affecting the ability to speak, write, and understand language, results from brain damage, most often due to a stroke. Although people of any age can acquire aphasia, the disorder most commonly affects adults middle-aged and older.

One of the most common communication disorders in older adults is hearing loss, affecting approximately one in three adults ages 65 to 74, and nearly half of those older than 75. Hearing loss can lead to feelings of isolation and loss of connection from family, friends, and the community. Although hearing aids and other assistive devices can improve quality of life, only about one in four adults (age 20 and over) who could benefit from hearing aids has ever used them.

HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

It's important to take care of yourself and get the most from life. Below are 10 practical ways to look after your mental health. Making simple changes to how you live doesn't need to cost a fortune or take up loads of time. Anyone can follow this advice. Why not start today?

1. Talk about your feelings

Talking about your feelings can help you stay in good mental health and deal with times when you feel troubled.

2. Keep active

Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem and can help you concentrate, sleep, and look and feel better. Exercise keeps the brain and your other vital organs healthy, and is also a significant benefit towards improving your mental health.

3. Eat well

Your brain needs a mix of nutrients in order to stay healthy and function well, just like the other organs in your body. A diet that's good for your physical health is also good for your mental health.

4. Drink sensibly

We often drink alcohol to change our mood. Some people drink to deal with fear or loneliness, but the effect is only temporary. Drinking is not a good way to manage difficult feelings.

5. Keep in touch

There's nothing better than catching up with someone face to face, but that's not always possible. You can also give them a call, drop them a note, or chat to them online instead. Keep the lines of communication open: it's good for you!

6. Ask for help

None of us are superhuman. We all sometimes get tired or overwhelmed by how we feel or when things don't go as planned.

7. Take a break

A change of scene or a change of pace is good for your mental health. A few minutes can be enough to de-stress you. Give yourself some 'me time'.

8. Do something you're good at

What do you love doing? What activities can you lose yourself in? What did you love doing in the past? Enjoying yourself can help beat stress.

9. Accept who you are

We're all different. It's much healthier to accept that you're unique than to wish you were more like someone else.

10. Care for others

Friends are really important... We help each other whenever we can, so it's a two-way street, and supporting them can uplift you.

May Is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

Since 1984, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) has declared May to be "National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month." It's a peak season for people with asthma and allergies, and a perfect time to educate patients, family, friends, co-workers and others about these diseases.

More Than Asthma, More Than Food Allergies

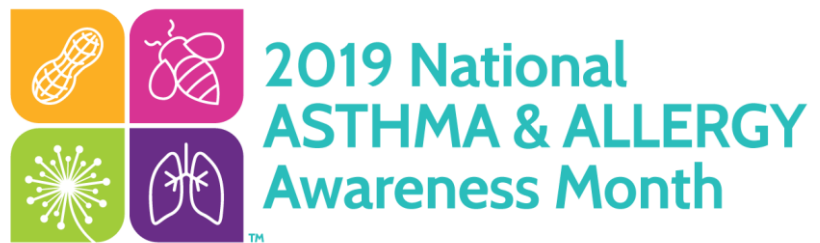
More than 60 million Americans overall have asthma and allergies.

- About 26 million Americans have asthma (19 million adults and 6.2 million children)
- About 32 million Americans have food allergies (26 million adults and 6 million children)
- About 21 million Americans have hayfever, rhinitis or nasal allergies (20 million adults and 5.6 million children)

These numbers paint a picture of how many people in the U.S. are managing asthma and allergies. But they don't paint a picture of the overall impact these diseases have on people and communities.

These conditions can be challenging to manage. But it's important to remember your condition doesn't define you.

This year, we want to help dispel the myths and help others see beyond the disease. Let's share how you are more than asthma or more than food allergies. Maybe you are a friend, teacher, professional, athlete, artist, adventurer or advocate.



resources this issue

Resources: <https://www.stroke.org/may-is-national-stroke-awareness-month/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/features/highbloodpressure/index.html>
<http://blog.arthritis.org/news/arthritis-awareness-month/>
<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/news/2019/may-is-better-hearing-and-speech-month>
<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-to-mental-health/>
<https://www.aaafa.org/asthma-and-allergy-awareness-month/>