



Your strong heart and sharp mind

**A guide to heart and brain health
for African-Americans**



What's good for your heart is good for your brain

**A public awareness program of the American Heart Association
and Alzheimer's Association**



American Heart Association® | American Stroke Association®

Learn and Live®

alzheimer's association®

African-Americans may be at higher risk for heart disease, stroke and Alzheimer's



Did you know?

- More than 40 percent of African-Americans have high blood pressure (HBP) and are at risk for stroke—which can lead to a greater risk for developing Alzheimer's.
- African-Americans are at higher risk* for diabetes, a disease with a strong connection to Alzheimer's, vascular dementia and stroke.
- Having high cholesterol increases the risk for stroke, and may increase the risk for Alzheimer's.
- African-Americans may have a higher rate of vascular (stroke-related) dementia.*

What is stroke?

Stroke is a type of heart disease that affects the arteries inside and leading to the brain. A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain either bursts or is blocked. Stroke is the third-leading cause of death, and African-Americans are twice as likely to have a stroke.* More than 100,000 African-Americans have a stroke every year.

What is Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's (AHLZ-high-merz) destroys brain cells and shrinks the brain. It is the seventh-leading cause of death in the United States and the most common form of dementia (dih-MEN-shuh), a group of brain disorders that causes problems with memory, judgment and other brain functions. Other dementias include vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies and frontotemporal dementia.

*Compared to Caucasian Americans

Make the connection: Your heart and your brain

Your heart works hard. So does your brain. Every heartbeat pumps about one-fifth of your blood to your brain. Your brain cells need the oxygen and nutrients carried by your blood so you can think clearly, speak and remember.

Conditions that damage your heart and blood vessels can interfere with the brain's vital supply lines.

Many risk factors for heart disease and stroke also threaten brain health:

- High blood pressure
- Being overweight
- High cholesterol
- Lack of exercise
- Diabetes (high blood sugar)

We know that African-Americans have a higher risk for diabetes, high blood pressure and other cardiovascular risk factors. Partner with your doctor to watch for early warning signs of these conditions so you can get them under control.

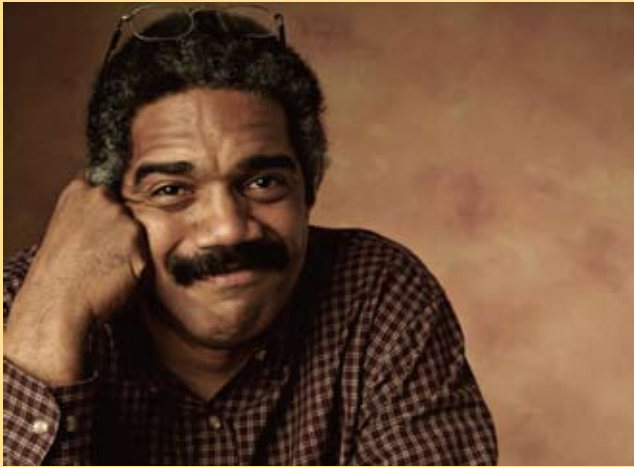
Stroke is a medical emergency. Here are five warning signs:

1. Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
2. Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
3. Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
4. Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
5. Sudden, painful headache with no known cause

Memory loss that disrupts everyday life is not a normal part of aging.

Here are 10 signs of Alzheimer's disease:

1. Memory loss
2. Difficulty doing familiar tasks
3. Problems with talking or writing
4. Confusion about time and place
5. Loss of judgment
6. Problems with abstract thinking
7. Misplacing things
8. Changes in mood or behavior
9. Changes in personality
10. Loss of motivation



Understand your risks

African-Americans may have a higher risk for Alzheimer's disease and stroke because of factors that can't be controlled, such as age and family history. So, it's important to keep an eye on changes in health, and do what you can to make healthy choices every day.

There are risk factors individuals can control if they take steps to keep their brains healthier as they age.

Keep in mind that what's good for your heart is good for your brain.



Be heart-smart – watch your numbers

- Blood pressure – desirable blood pressure is less than 120/80
- Blood sugar – desirable fasting blood sugar is less than 100 mg/dL
- Body weight – keep your body weight in the recommended range
- Cholesterol –desirable cholesterol is less than 200 mg/dL

Be brain-smart – make healthy lifestyle choices

- Stay mentally active
- Remain socially involved
- Stay physically active
- Reduce your intake of fat and cholesterol
- Don't smoke

Keep your heart strong and mind sharp

See your doctor

Find out what risk factors you need to get under control today.

Consider a clinical research study

African-Americans are needed to participate in clinical studies. Contact the Alzheimer's Association or the American Stroke Association to find out more about volunteering for a study that will help find the best new treatments.

Be aware

Learn more about Alzheimer's and stroke, and how you can reduce your risk.

Contact the American Stroke Association at www.strokeassociation.org or 1.888.478.7653.

Contact the Alzheimer's Association at www.alz.org/heartbrain or 1.800.272.3900.



POWER TO END STROKESM

You are the Power

alzheimer's  association[®]

the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer