

Directions for Presenters

This slide is for people who want to present this health lesson to a group.
If you are using these slides for your own health education, please disregard this slide.

Review all the slides and presenter notes before your presentation. If you can, print out the presenter notes to have them handy in case you need them.

Introduction: (30 seconds)

- Greet the audience.
- Introduce yourself and your topic.
- Let people know they can take pictures of any of the slides they find helpful.

At the end of your presentation:

- Thank your audience for their time and open the discussion to questions.
- If there are questions you can not answer, please refer them to our stroke.org website and social media handles for more information.
- If a community member asks you a medical question that you don't know the answer to, please advise them to speak with their doctor or licensed medical professional.



Stroke

What are the warning signs and how can I prevent one?

HEALTH LESSONS
STROKE.ORG | 2025

WHAT WE DO

Invest in and support lifesaving heart and brain research for over 100 years.

FUNDED PACEMAKERS AND ICDS RESEARCH



Contributed to developing cutting-edge devices, including leadless pacemakers and wearable defibrillators.

DEVELOPMENT OF CPR GUIDELINES AND CONTINUED EFFORTS



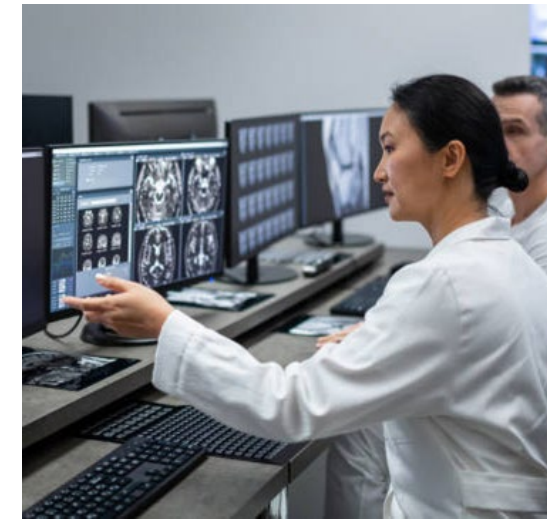
Created CPR and AED guidelines and pushed for laws to require CPR training in schools and more public AEDs to help save lives.

FUNDING HEART DISEASE, STROKE, AND BRAIN RESEARCH



Investing in cutting-edge research that has led to lifesaving treatments and innovations in cardiovascular and brain care.

FUNDING INNOVATION IN HEART DISEASE DIAGNOSTICS



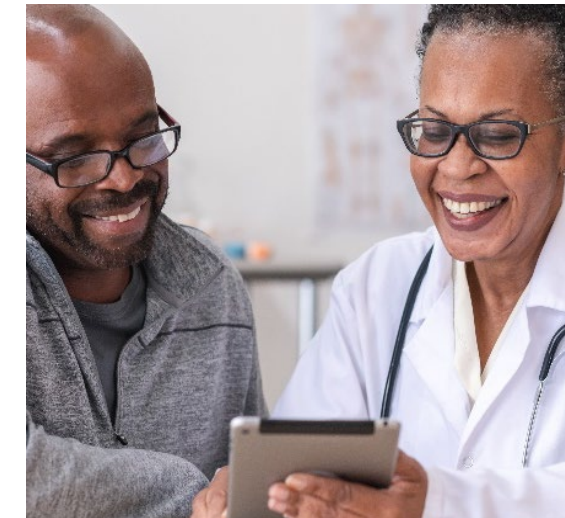
Advancing imaging techniques, such as MRI and CT scans, along with biomarkers for the early detection of heart disease.

FUNDING ACUTE STROKE CARE



Funding research to support timely intervention strategies for patients with stroke, which has significantly improved survival rates and recovery outcomes.

DEVELOPMENT OF HYPERTENSION GUIDELINES AND RESEARCH



Updated blood pressure guidelines with collaborators to support early detection and care. Funded research on causes, prevention and treatment.

Who Is



**American
Stroke
Association.**
*A division of the
American Heart Association.*



Created in 1998 as **a division of the American Heart Association.**

The American Stroke Association works with millions of volunteers to prevent, treat and beat stroke by **funding innovative research, fighting for stronger public health policies and providing lifesaving tools and information.**

Stroke

Stroke is the second leading cause of death globally.

Yet approximately 80% of strokes are preventable.





MAIN PURPOSE

STROKE

- What is it
- What causes it
- How to prevent it

What is a Stroke?

A stroke happens in the brain. Most strokes happen because something blocks the blood flow in the brain.

Ischemic Stroke: A part of the brain doesn't get enough blood and oxygen, brain cells die, causing a stroke.

Hemorrhagic Stroke: When a blood vessel in the brain bursts.

Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA): When blood flow to the brain is blocked for a short time. This is a warning sign that a bigger stroke could happen soon.



Let's Talk About Risk Factors



What are some things
you CAN'T control
that would put you at
higher risk for a stroke?



Prior Stroke, TIA or Heart Attack

If you've already had a stroke, your risk increases.



Family history

Your risk is almost twice as high if a parent, sister or brother has had a stroke.



Race/ethnicity

Some communities face a higher stroke risk because they experience more health problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity.



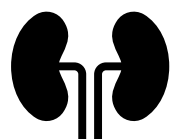
Age

The chance of having a stroke doubles for each decade of life after age 55.



Gender

Women have more strokes than men. Stroke kills more women than men.



Chronic kidney disease

People with kidney disease seem to have a higher chance of having a stroke.

Things That Put You at Risk That CAN'T be changed or are hard to control



Let's Talk About Risk Factors



What are some things
you CAN control,
treat or improve to
reduce your risk of a
stroke?

Things That Put You at Risk

That you CAN control, treat and improve



- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Unhealthy diet (high sodium, low potassium)
- Physical inactivity
- Obesity
- Tobacco use and smoking
- Alcohol use
- Diabetes
- Other health conditions, such as atrial fibrillation, sleep apnea, sickle cell disease

Why It Matters

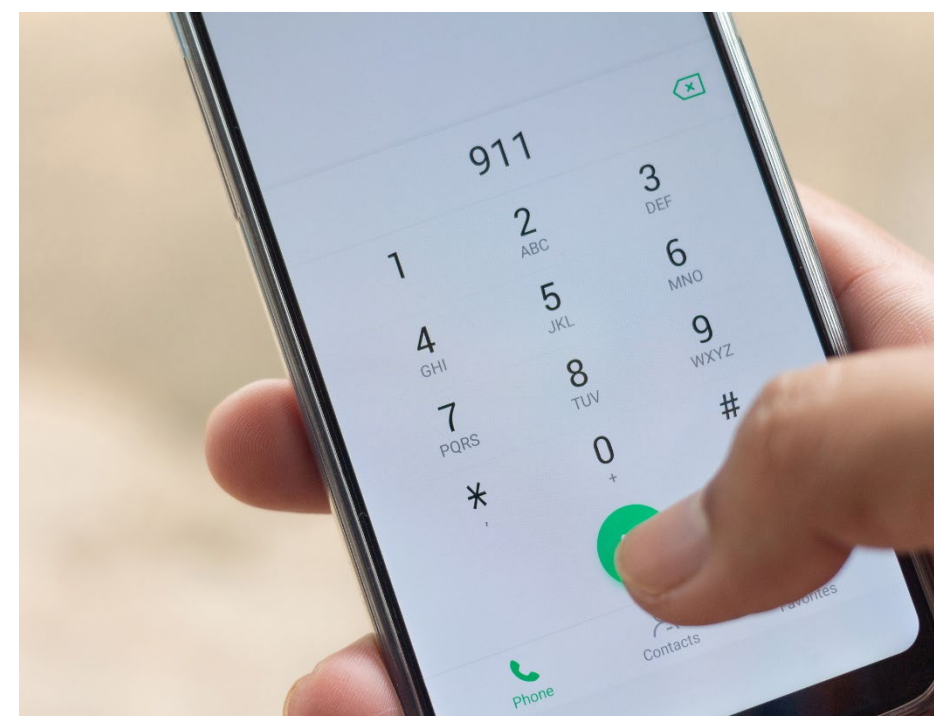
Personal Impacts of Stroke



- Disability and physical challenges
- Cognitive, emotional and behavioral challenges
- Communication difficulties
- Vision and hearing problems
- Economic impact: higher medical bills and lost productivity.
- Family impact: Poor health affects your ability to care for loved ones and enjoy time with them.

Learning to Spot a Stroke

F.A.S.T. Warning Signs



- Face Drooping: Does one side of the face droop, or is it numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the person's smile uneven?
- Arm Weakness: Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- Speech Difficulty: Is speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a sentence, such as "The sky is blue." Is the sentence repeated correctly?
- Time to Call 911: If someone shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 911 immediately. Check the time, so you'll know when the first symptoms appeared.

Other Stroke Symptoms



Beyond F.A.S.T., other symptoms you should know include **SUDDEN**:

- NUMBNESS or weakness of the leg, arm or face
- CONFUSION, trouble speaking or understanding speech
- TROUBLE SEEING in one or both eyes
- TROUBLE WALKING, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- SEVERE HEADACHE with no known cause

Call 911 or emergency medical
services immediately!

Calling 911

What to Expect and How to Stay Calm



Calling 911 can save a life. Stroke treatment works best when it starts early—so every minute counts.

When you call the operator, they will most probably ask “What is your emergency?” *You can say: “I think someone is having a stroke.”*

Stay on the phone. The operator will ask questions to help send the right help fast. You don’t need to know everything. Just share what you see: slurred speech, weakness, confusion, or trouble walking. You can say, *“They’re not acting like themselves,” or “Their face looks uneven.”*

You can stay anonymous - you don’t have to give your name.

The 911 operator will send an ambulance with trained medical staff. They may stay on the phone with you until help arrives. In most stroke calls, paramedics—not police—respond first.

Emergency teams are trained to help, not to judge. Their goal is to save lives.

Stay with the person. Keep them safe and calm. Don’t give them food, drink, or medication unless told to.



Taking Care of Your Heart and Brain



**The three most important things
you can do to lower your risk of
stroke are:**

1. Stop smoking or vaping
2. If you have high blood pressure,
manage it
3. If you have high cholesterol, lower it

Let's Talk Tobacco & Nicotine



Which one of these is a risk if you smoke?

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Depression and anxiety
- Premature aging
- ✓ All of the above

Quitting Tobacco or Nicotine



Talk to your health care professional

They can be a partner in your plan and may suggest medications that can help you quit.

Commit to a quit day

Choose a day in the next week.

Cold turkey or gradual?

Decide if you will quit all at once or start cutting down.

Get prepared

Keep healthy snacks on hand and plan fun ways to fill your time when you feel the urge to smoke.

Managing High Blood Pressure

Know your blood pressure numbers –

High blood pressure is 130/80 or higher

Blood Pressure Categories

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120–129	and	LESS THAN 80
STAGE 1 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	130–139	or	80–89
STAGE 2 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION (If you don't have symptoms*, call your health care professional)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120
HYPERTENSIVE EMERGENCY (If you have any of these symptoms*, call 911)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

*symptoms: chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking

heart.org/bplevels

What The Numbers Mean



Top Number = **Systolic Pressure**

Shows how much pressure your blood is pushing against your artery walls when the heart beats.

Bottom Number = **Diastolic Pressure**

Shows how much pressure your blood is pushing against your artery walls while the heart is resting between beats.

How to Take Your Blood Pressure at Home



30 minutes before:

- No smoking
- No exercise
- No caffeinated beverages
- No alcohol

To get an accurate measurement:

- Rest for at least 5 minutes.
- Don't talk.
- Rest your arm comfortably on a flat surface at heart level.
- Sit upright, back straight and supported.
- Keep legs uncrossed and feet flat on the floor.
- Use a properly validated device.
- The bottom of the cuff needs to be above the bend of the elbow.
- Wrap the cuff against your bare skin, not over clothing.

Partnering With Your Health Care Professional



Stick to the plan

It's vital to stick to the medication plan your health care professional has recommended.

Ask questions

If you have any concerns about side effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

OTC medications

Discuss over-the-counter (OTC) medications with your pharmacist or doctor. Pain relievers or decongestants may affect your blood pressure.

High Blood Pressure

Key Thing to Remember



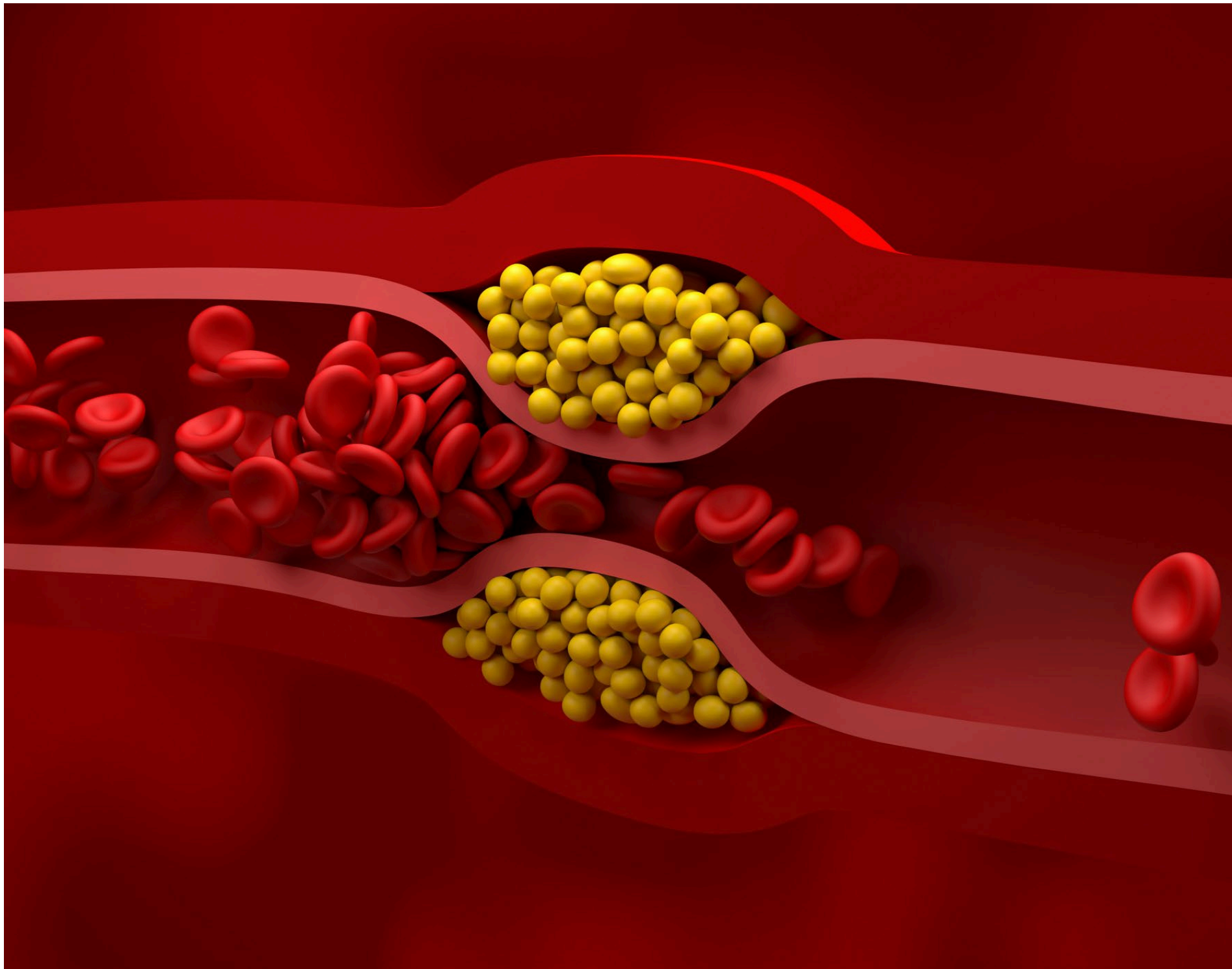
High blood pressure causes damage to the arteries over time. That damage can lead to blockages and blood clots that limit blood supply to vital organs. Without oxygen and nutrients from blood, the tissue dies. High blood pressure is the leading risk factor for stroke and a number of heart conditions.

The good news is it can be treated and even prevented by making healthy choices such as eating well, moving your body, and taking medication if it's prescribed.

Health care professionals want most adults with high blood pressure to keep their blood pressure below 130 over 80. *They may have different goals for people who are sick, older or pregnant.*

Check with your health care professional if you have any questions.

Understanding Cholesterol



Cholesterol is a fat-like substance that comes from two sources: FOOD and your BODY.

It is only found in foods from animal sources. It travels in the body by lipoproteins (LDL and HDL)

High cholesterol can affect your heart and brain health. It can lead to heart disease and increase the risk of some types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease.



HDL = GOOD

High-density lipoprotein is known as “good” cholesterol.



LDL = BAD

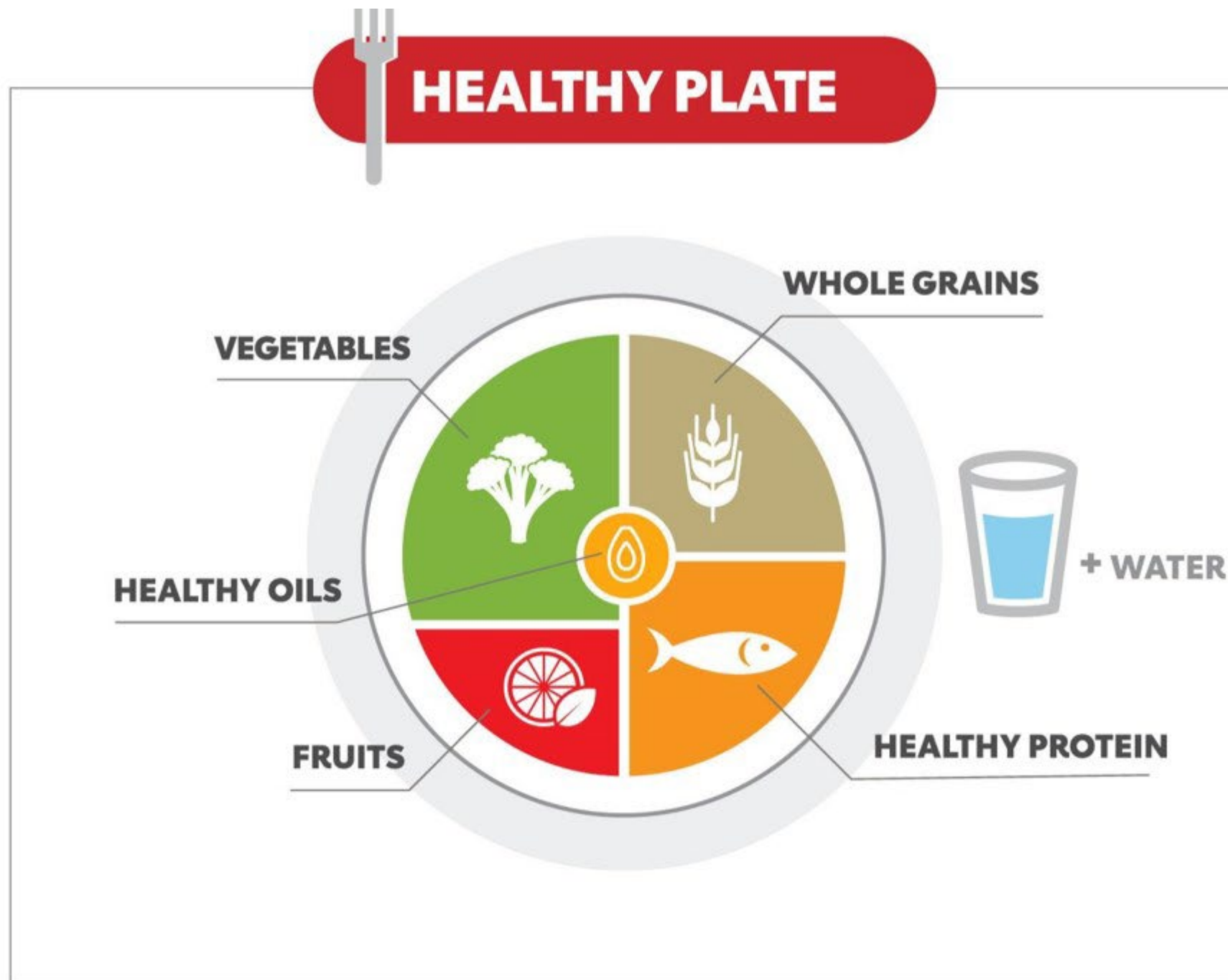
Low-density lipoprotein is known as “bad” cholesterol.

Let's Talk Food



What are some easy
ways to add more fruits
and vegetables to
meals?

Enjoying a Healthy Diet



Build a Healthy Plate

- ½ veggies and fruits
- ¼ whole grains such as brown rice
- ¼ protein such as beans, skinless chicken or fish



Move More

Exercise can help lower cholesterol numbers. It can also improve your mood and clear your mind.

Don't Forget



1. Learn the F.A.S.T. Warning Signs
2. Think You're Having a Stroke? Call 911.
3. By following Life's Essential 8™, you can keep your heart and brain healthy!
4. Remember that about 80% of strokes are preventable.
5. You have the power to start making small changes today.

Visit stroke.org for more information

Make a Commitment



Which small change will you start this week?

- Get your blood pressure checked?
- Move more?
- Add a serving of veggies?
- If you smoke or vape- schedule a day to quit?

Stay In Touch



Follow us on social media
@AmericanHeart and
@AmericanStroke and DM us to
let us know how you're doing!

