



*Getting Better
All the Time*

FOR INTERNAL REVIEW
May, 2011

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**PENINSULA HOME CARE MAKES THE PATIENT THE “MVP”
DURING STROKE AWARENESS MONTH**

Free Risk Scorecards Available to Help Patients Prevent Stroke

SALISBURY, MD – A baseball game wouldn’t be the same if the teams didn’t keep track of the score, and as in any sport, it is important to keep the score when it comes to personal health. Tracking what one is doing well and what improvements or changes are needed can lead to a healthier, more active life.

According to the National Stroke Association, in the United States, stroke is the third leading cause of death, killing about 137,000 people each year. Stroke is also a leading cause of serious, long-term adult disability.

Stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is interrupted or severely reduced, depriving brain tissue of oxygen and food. Within minutes, brain cells begin to die.

“The best way to protect oneself from stroke is to understand the risk factors and how to manage them,” said Therese Ganster, Peninsula Home Care branch director. “Risks can easily be assessed during a regular physical with your doctor. The good news is that strokes can be treated and prevented.”

Knowing the Risks

The best way to protect oneself from stroke is to understand the risk factors and how to manage them. There are two types of risk factors for stroke; controllable and uncontrollable. Controllable risk factors fall into two categories: lifestyle and medical. Lifestyle risk factors can often be changed, while medical risk factors can usually be treated. Peninsula Home Care is offering free Stroke Scorecards to help patients keep track of the risk factors involved with stroke.

Controllable Risk Factors	Uncontrollable Risk Factors
<p>High Blood Pressure - High blood pressure causes the heart to pump harder to move blood which can weaken blood vessels and damage major organs such as the brain. Left untreated, high blood pressure can lead to stroke.</p>	<p>Age - after the age of 55, stroke risk doubles for every decade a person is alive</p>

Atrial Fibrillation - (AF) is caused when the two upper chambers of the heart (atria) beat rapidly and unpredictably, producing an irregular heartbeat. AF raises stroke risk because it allows blood to pool in the heart.	Gender - women suffer more strokes each year than men but stroke incidence is higher in men than women at younger ages
High Cholesterol - High levels of cholesterol in the bloodstream can clog arteries and cause a stroke or heart attack	Race - African Americans have twice the risk of stroke when compared to Caucasians. Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islanders also have a higher risk
Diabetes - People with diabetes are up to 4 times more likely to have a stroke than someone who does not have the disease	Family History - If a family member has had a stroke, everyone in the family has a higher risk of stroke
Atherosclerosis - can clog arteries and block the flow of blood to the brain or other parts of the body, making a person more at risk for a stroke	Previous Stroke - About 5 to 14 percent of the people who have a stroke this year will have a second one
Tobacco & Alcohol Use - Smoking also doubles the risk of stroke / Drinking large amounts of alcohol may increase risk for stroke	Fibromuscular Dysplasia - FMD happens when some of the arteries that carry blood throughout the body do not develop as they should. As a result, blood flow through the arteries decreases.
Obesity - Obesity and excess weight put a strain on the entire circulatory system and makes people more likely to have high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes	Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO or Hole in the Heart) - Stroke can be caused by a "hole" in the heart called a patent foramen ovale (PFO). About 1 in 5 Americans has a PFO.

Signs & Symptoms – You Don’t Get Three Strikes when it comes to Stroke

Stroke signs and symptoms to watch for include the following:

- Trouble with walking
- Trouble with speaking and understanding
- Paralysis or numbness on one side of your body or face
- Trouble with seeing in one or both eyes
- Headache

For more information on stroke awareness and to download your free Stroke Risk Scorecard, please visit www.peninsulahomecare.com or call 410- 543-7550.

About Peninsula Home Care

Peninsula Home Care provides health care services, resources and “real world” therapy in the home. The home health staff provides and coordinates the care and/or therapy that a patient’s doctor orders. The home health staff develops a care plan that includes services to reach and maintain a patient’s physical, mental and social well being. Services include nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology and access to medical social workers and home health aides. Peninsula Home Care ensures that all patients are involved in their plan of care and

strives to give them every opportunity to maintain their independence in the home. Peninsula Home Care has recently surpassed serving 30,000 patients *and* has been named to the “Home Health Care Elite” for the second consecutive year. The Home Health Care Elite, awarded by OCS Home Care, recognizes the top 25-percent of home health agencies based on performance measures in quality outcomes, quality improvement and financial performance.

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