

Eat to reduce your risk of stroke

A stroke can affect any part of the brain and can result in many issues for the patient, namely motor, sensory and cognitive. These problems can impact the nutritional status of the stroke patient. It is important for a multidisciplinary approach to find strategies to help overcome problems that affect nutrition and hydration.

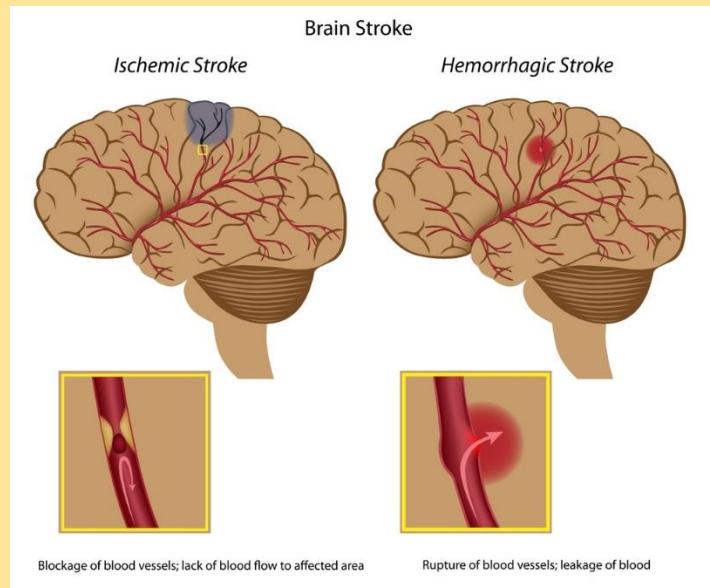
In the aftermath of a stroke, sufferers may lose weight and this can hamper recovery. Further, inadequate nutrition can be due to swallowing difficulties, problems with movement (many stroke patients struggle to use cutlery), problems with memory and a loss of appetite.

However, eating a healthy diet can reduce your risk of having another stroke or slash your risk of having one in the first place!

Consuming a diet that is low in saturated fat, salt, alcohol and added sugars can reduce your risk factors for cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes and being overweight – all independent risk factors for stroke.

Here's what you can do:

- 1) Include plenty of fruits and vegetables – these foods contain powerful antioxidants, potassium, fibre and folate to help reduce your risk factors of cardiovascular disease, including stroke
- 2) Go with the grain – eat wholegrain breads, brown rice, wholemeal pasta, quinoa, and oats.



These foods contain a raft of essential vitamins and minerals as well as fibre. Studies regularly show the health benefits associated with consuming wholegrain breads and cereals

- 3) Drink up – aim to consume 8–10 cups of fluid per day. You can meet your fluid requirements by drinking water, tea, coffee and milk drinks
- 4) Go lean – include low fat sources of protein such as chicken (without the skin) and trim the visible fat from meat
- 5) Include oily fish – omega 3 fatty acids are wonderful for your heart – aim to include two serves of either salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines each week
- 6) Wear your milk moustache proudly – opt for low fat dairy including milk, yoghurt, cheese and custard. Aim for 3–4 serves per day
- 7) Go nuts – include a small handful of nuts and seeds each day
- 8) Limit alcohol – Australian guidelines recommend no more than two standard drinks per day e.g. 2x pots, 1x stubby, 2x 100ml glass of wine
- 9) Slash your salt intake – Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure. Choose 'no added salt' or 'reduced salt' products and opt for whole foods where possible
- 10) Exercise regularly – physical activity improves heart rate and helps to lower blood pressure



Need help with any dietary advice?

This article was written by OSCAR Hospitality Dietitians.

Please call or email them via our contact details below.