

# HealthyLiving

CONNECTING WITH OUR PATIENTS AND OUR COMMUNITY

## Know the Signs of Stroke and How to Prevent It

May is National Stroke Awareness Month, a time to highlight the importance of recognizing stroke symptoms quickly and taking steps to reduce risk. A stroke is a medical emergency that occurs when blood flow to the brain is interrupted, either by a blockage or a rupture of a blood vessel. Without quick treatment, brain cells begin to die within minutes, which can lead to long-term disability or death.

One of the most effective ways to identify a stroke is by remembering the acronym **BE FAST**.

**Balance:** Does the person have a sudden loss of balance?

**Eyes:** Are they experiencing blurred or double vision in one or both eyes?

**Face:** Ask them to smile. Does one side of their face droop?

**Arms:** Ask them to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

**Speech:** Ask them to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?

**Terrible Headache:**

Are they experiencing a sudden terrible headache with no known cause?

Additional warning signs may include sudden confusion, dizziness, severe headache with no known cause, or difficulty walking.



### Differences in Stroke Symptoms Between Men and Women

While many stroke symptoms are similar for both men and women, there are some important differences of which to be aware.

Men are more likely to experience the classic **BE FAST** symptoms, such as facial drooping, arm weakness, and speech difficulties.

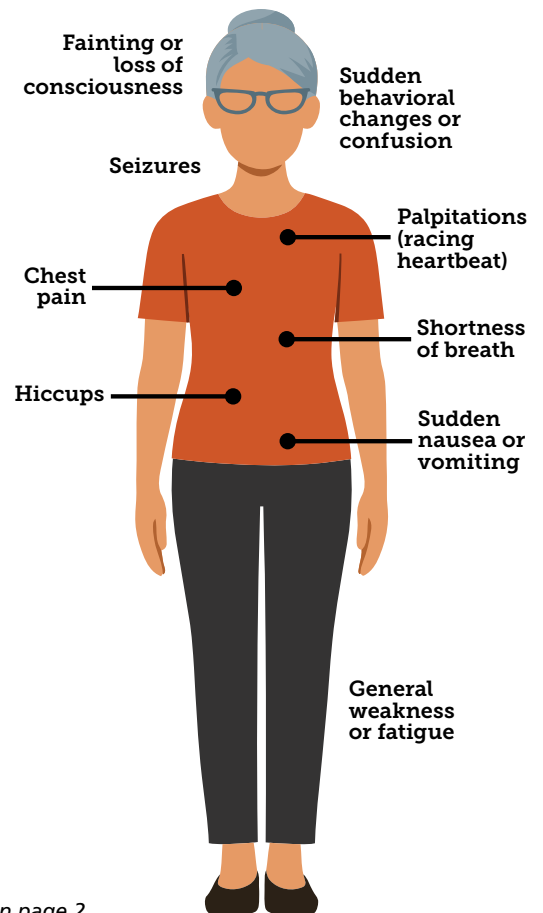
Women, however, may experience additional, less typical symptoms that can sometimes be overlooked or misinterpreted.

"Because these symptoms may not immediately be recognized as signs of a stroke, women may delay seeking care, which can lead to worse outcomes," said Anita Mehta, DO, MS, neurologist and director of the Stroke Program at Saint Peter's University Hospital.

"Increasing awareness of these differences is an important step in improving outcomes for all patients."

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### Additional Symptoms of Stroke in Women



## Know the Signs of Stroke *(continued)*

### Reducing Your Risk

While not all strokes can be prevented, many risk factors can be managed through healthy lifestyle choices and regular medical care.

- **Control blood pressure**

High blood pressure is the leading risk factor for stroke. Monitoring levels regularly and following a healthcare provider's recommendations can significantly reduce risk.

- **Manage chronic conditions**

Conditions such as diabetes, high cholesterol, and heart disease increase the likelihood of stroke. Proper management through medication, diet, and routine care is essential.

- **Adopt a healthy diet**

A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy supports overall cardiovascular health. Reducing sodium intake is especially important for maintaining healthy blood pressure.

- **Stay physically active**

Regular exercise helps improve circulation, maintain a healthy weight, and reduce stress. Moderate activity, such as walking for 30 minutes a day, can make a meaningful difference.

- **Avoid smoking and limit alcohol**

Smoking damages blood vessels and increases clot formation, while excessive alcohol consumption can raise blood pressure. Quitting smoking and limiting alcohol intake are important preventive steps.

"Many strokes can be prevented by managing risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and lifestyle habits," said Dr. Mehta. "When a stroke does occur, every second matters. Recognizing the signs using BE FAST and calling 911 immediately can make a life-saving difference and greatly improve a person's chances of recovery."

**To learn more about Saint Peter's stroke program, visit [saintpetershcs.com/stroke](https://saintpetershcs.com/stroke).**

**If you have risk factors for stroke, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or a family history of stroke, schedule an appointment with Dr. Mehta at 732.745.6643.**

### Recovery and Rehabilitation

Stroke recovery often involves a combination of therapies designed to help individuals regain independence and improve their quality of life. Rehabilitation may address physical movement, speech, cognitive function, and daily living skills.

**Physical therapy** focuses on improving strength, balance, coordination, and mobility, helping individuals regain independence in movement and daily activities.

**Occupational therapy** helps individuals relearn essential daily living skills, such as dressing, bathing, cooking, and returning to work or other meaningful activities. It also addresses fine motor skills, coordination, and strategies to adapt to physical or cognitive changes after a stroke.

**Speech and language therapy** supports recovery of communication skills, including speaking, understanding, reading, and writing. It can also address swallowing difficulties that may occur after a stroke.

Each person's rehabilitation journey is unique, depending on the severity of the stroke and the areas of the brain affected. A coordinated, multidisciplinary approach can help stroke survivors make meaningful progress in their recovery and improve their overall quality of life.

**Visit [saintpetershcs.com/hwc](https://saintpetershcs.com/hwc) to learn more or to schedule an appointment at Saint Peter's Health and Wellness Center.**



### Expert Stroke Care Close to Home

Saint Peter's University Hospital, a primary stroke center, is nationally recognized by the Joint Commission for delivering high-quality stroke care based on the latest science. Saint Peter's received the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines® – Stroke Gold Plus quality achievement award for proven dedication to research-based treatment that improves survival, reduces disability, and supports recovery. The hospital also earned the Target: Stroke<sup>SM</sup> Honor Roll and the Target: Type 2 Diabetes<sup>TM</sup> Honor Roll for ensuring patients with Type 2 diabetes receive up-to-date, evidence-based stroke care.

# Mammogram Myths and Facts

“Mammograms are one of the most effective tools for detecting breast cancer early, often before symptoms appear. Yet, misconceptions continue to prevent some people from getting screened,” said Lisa Hopkins, MD, a breast surgeon with Astera Cancer Care who sees patients at Saint Peter’s Breast Center. “Understanding the facts can help individuals make informed decisions about their health.”



## **Myth: Mammograms are only necessary if there is a family history of breast cancer.**

**Fact:** While family history can increase risk, most people diagnosed with breast cancer do not have a known family history. Routine screening is important for all women, especially beginning at age 40 or earlier if recommended by a physician.

## **Myth: Mammograms are painful.**

**Fact:** Technology has advanced to make mammograms more comfortable for women. Saint Peter’s University Hospital uses the Hologic® SmartCurve™ in its Women’s Imaging Center for a more comfortable mammography experience. SmartCurve is a curved compression paddle that is shaped more like a woman’s natural curves. It is clinically proven to increase comfort and decrease the pain associated with the compression of breast tissue during the procedure.

## **Myth: If there are no symptoms, a mammogram is unnecessary.**

**Fact:** Mammograms are designed to detect cancer early, often before any physical symptoms develop. Early detection can significantly improve treatment outcomes and survival rates.

## **Myth: Mammograms are not needed as you age.**

**Fact:** Regular mammograms remain important as women get older. The risk of breast cancer increases with age, making continued screening essential for early detection. Women should talk with their healthcare provider about how long to continue screening based on their overall health, medical history, and personal risk factors.

Regular mammograms are a critical part of preventive health care. They empower individuals with information and provide peace of mind or early intervention when needed. Be sure to include your mammogram on your checklist of routine health visits and screenings.

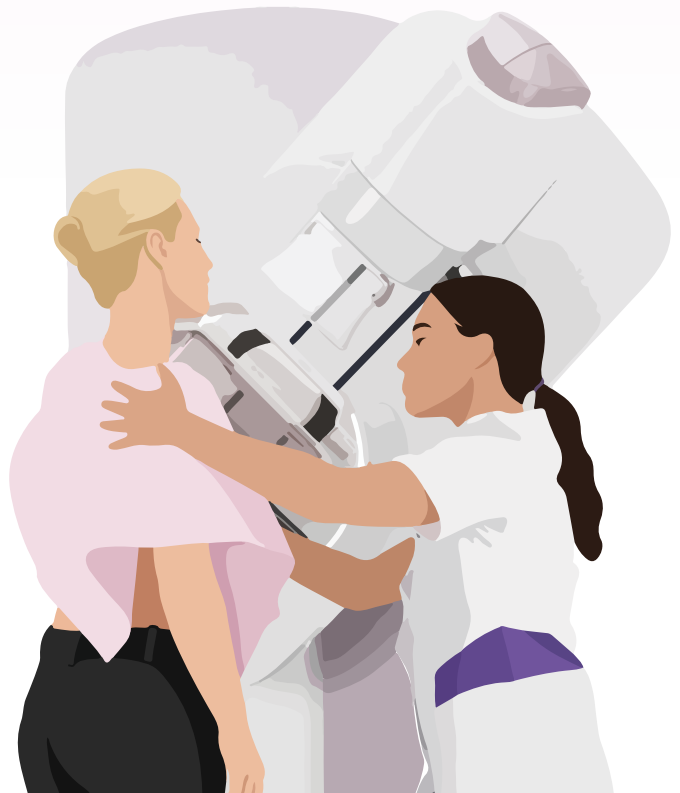
**Saint Peter’s is proud to be accredited by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC), a distinction that reflects its commitment to excellence in breast care.**

**To schedule an appointment at Saint Peter’s, call:  
The Women’s Imaging Center at 732.339.7704  
Astera Breast Care at 732.846.3300**

**To learn more, visit  
[saintpetershcs.com/breastcenter](http://saintpetershcs.com/breastcenter).**

For those who have a history of breast cancer in their families, the Department of Medical Genetics and Genomic Medicine at Saint Peter’s University Hospital provides comprehensive genetic counseling, testing, and risk assessment to support informed decisions about screening and preventive care.

**To schedule an appointment,  
visit [saintpetershcs.com/genetics](http://saintpetershcs.com/genetics).**



## Diabetes Education\*

For information about classes, call the numbers listed below.



### Diabetes Self-Management Education

Call for information: 732.339.7630

### Gestational Diabetes Self-Management Education

Call for information: 732.339.7630



**Prevent T2 Program**  
Call for information:  
732.339.7772

## Parent Education

Some classes online. Access information will be provided after registration.

Register at [saintpetershcs.com/ParentEd](http://saintpetershcs.com/ParentEd). For more information, call 732.745.8579.

### Baby Care

**Birth Center Class**  
(for moms under midwifery care)

### Breastfeeding Class

**Childbirth Education**  
(in Spanish)

### Grandparents Class

### Hypnobirthing™

### New Daddy Class

**Prenatal Breastfeeding**  
(in Spanish)

### Prenatal Yoga/ Exercise Class

**Prepared Childbirth/ Lamaze Classes**  
**Sibling Class**

## Parent Support

Registration is required. Visit [saintpetershcs.com/ParentEd](http://saintpetershcs.com/ParentEd) or call 732.745.8579.

### New Moms Support Group "Life Will Never Be The Same"

1st Tuesday of each month  
Next meeting: May 5 • 12 pm

### Breastfeeding Support Group

1st Tuesday of each month  
Next meeting: May 5 • 1 pm

## Support Groups

### Bariatric Nutrition Support

2nd Thursday of each month  
Next meeting: May 14 • 6 – 7 pm  
Call 732.339.7450 for Zoom meeting information

### Bereavement

Call Pastoral Care for information:  
732.745.8565

### MyGoal Autism Family

2nd Sunday of each month  
Next meeting: May 10 • 3 pm  
Call 877.886.9462 or email [info@mygoalautism.org](mailto:info@mygoalautism.org) for virtual meeting information

### SHARE

3rd Thursday of each month  
Next meeting: May 21 • 7 – 9 pm  
Call 732.745.8522 or email [imariano@saintpetersuh.com](mailto:imariano@saintpetersuh.com) for Zoom link

### Spouse/Partner Caregiver Support

Call for information:  
732.745.8600, x8653

### New Group!

### Stroke Survivors

First Wednesday of each month  
Next meeting: May 6 • 10 am  
To register, call 732.565.5455 or email [cknospe@saintpetersuh.com](mailto:cknospe@saintpetersuh.com)

## The Wound Care Center® and Hyperbaric Services

treats conditions such as:

- Bone infections
- Compromised skin grafts
- Diabetic foot ulcers/wounds
- Pressure ulcers
- Reopened surgical wounds
- Tissue damage from radiation
- Venous and arterial ulcers

**New Brunswick: 732.846.6199**

**Monroe: 609.860.0008**

TEERING OFF FOR KIDS:  
**THE DR. BIPIN PATEL COMMUNITY**

**GOLF OUTING**

BENEFITTING  
THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
AT SAINT PETER'S UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL  
A MEMBER OF SAINT PETER'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

**METUCHEN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB**  
244 PLAINFIELD ROAD, EDISON, NJ

9:30 A.M. REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST  
11:00 A.M. SHOTGUN START  
4:00 P.M. COCKTAILS, DINNER & AWARDS

**MONDAY JUNE 8 2026**

Call us at 732.745.7932  
Visit [saintpetershcs.com/communitygolf](http://saintpetershcs.com/communitygolf)

Need a doctor? To find a Saint Peter's physician, visit [saintpetershcs.com/findaphysician](http://saintpetershcs.com/findaphysician). Online scheduling is also available with select Saint Peter's Healthcare System physicians via Zocdoc at [BookMySPDoc.com](http://BookMySPDoc.com)

This calendar is for information only. Do not rely on it to make healthcare decisions on your own; instead, talk with your healthcare provider for advice and treatment. Do not ignore medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you read here. We do not suggest or endorse that you have any tests, use products, or use other information in this document without advice from your healthcare provider.



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State-designated children's hospital and regional perinatal center

