



California Area Indian Health Service

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Area Director's Message Ms. Margo Kerrigan, MPH



Stroke Awareness

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that supplies blood to the brain becomes blocked or bursts causing damage to brain cells. Strokes are one of the leading causes of death each year in the United States and American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) are 60% more likely to suffer a stroke than White adults.

It is estimated that 80% of strokes are preventable by engaging in a healthy lifestyle and working with your doctor

to treat or control diseases that put you at risk for stroke. Some of the diseases that can put you at risk include:

- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Atherosclerosis (plaque buildup on artery walls)
- Atrial Fibrillation (irregular heartbeat caused by the two upper chambers of the heart beating rapidly and unpredictably)

Certain lifestyle factors such as tobacco use/smoking, heavy

alcohol use, physical inactivity, and obesity also put you at increased risk of stroke.

80% of strokes are preventable

If symptoms of a stroke appear, immediate medical care is needed to reduce the damage to the brain. It is important to note the time of the very first symptoms so doctors can best decide on treatment options.

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Managing Stress to Stay Healthy By Helen Maldonado, PA-C, CDE



People that don't manage their stress often eat more and exercise less, causing weight gain. In diabetics, physical stress (such as a cold, flu, infection, or injury) and emotional stress can raise your blood sugar levels.

Overeating and skipping exercise can raise your blood sugar levels even higher. It is important to identify the reasons for the stress and plan ways to reduce it or manage it. Take 30 minutes to write down your stresses and some activities you can do to manage them. Some examples of stress-reducing activities include breathing deeply, taking a yoga class, punching a pillow, running around the block, walking every day, and reading a book. Exercising and making healthy food choices can help relieve stress and help you lose weight.

Start to defuse the stresses in your life today. Hold your weight steady during high stress and then refocus on weight loss when your stress level is reduced. Look for a 5K (3.1 miles) walk/run race and set a goal to complete it. Start practicing at least three times a week to build up the stamina to run/walk three miles. You will feel powerful accomplishing a goal like this.



Quit Smoking for Healthier Lungs By Christine Brennan, MPH



Smoking is a known cause of cancer, heart disease, and stroke. Lung disease and lung cancer contribute to almost half of the deaths from cigarette smoking each year.

Although much of the public is aware of the dangers of tobacco, cigarette use is surprisingly widespread. Approximately one out of every three American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) smoke. This is the highest rate of smoking prevalence among all adults of all ethnic and racial groups, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The AI/AN

population also has the highest prevalence of smokeless tobacco use.

According to the Surgeon General, quitting smoking is the most important step a smoker can take to improve the length of his/her life. Even quitting later in life will improve your health. It is important to remember that cigarette smoke is harmful to everyone who inhales it, not just the smoker. According to the American Lung Association, children who live with smokers get more chest colds and ear infections. The sooner you quit, the sooner those around you will benefit as well.

Cigarette smoke is harmful to everyone who inhales it, not just the smoker.

Smoking is not only bad for your health and for the health of those around you – smoking is also bad for

your bank account. Cigarettes can cost you thousands of dollars a year for smoking just one pack per day. Plus, state and federal laws are making it less convenient to smoke. Clean indoor air laws have made it illegal to smoke in many bars, restaurants, and other public places.

We know quitting smoking is difficult, and the Indian Health Service (IHS) is here to help. The IHS monitors the number of tobacco-using patients who are offered tobacco cessation counseling at each IHS and tribal health facility. During FY 2006, 12% of tobacco-using patients were offered counseling at all IHS and tribal health facilities nationwide. In FY 2010, the national rate increased to 25%.

For more information, visit:
National Institute of Health/National Cancer Institute
<http://www.smokefree.gov/>

American Lung Association
<http://www.lungusa.org/stop-smoking/>

Protect Yourself From Colorectal Cancer By Wendy Blocker, MSN

Colorectal cancer (cancer of the colon or rectum) affects both men and women. Colorectal cancers are the third most common type of cancer in the United States, and are the third leading cause of cancer death. People over age 50 are at the greatest risk for colorectal cancer. Other risk factors include a family history of the disease, a history of inflammatory bowel disease, high alcohol use, and tobacco use.

Fortunately, about 90% of colorectal cancers are thought to be preventable. Here are some steps you can take to reduce your risk of developing colorectal cancer:

- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight
- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Only use alcohol in moderation
- Stop smoking
- Get regular screening tests for colorectal cancer starting at age 50

Raising colorectal cancer screening rates is a priority for the Indian Health Service. Due to low rates of screening, American Indians and Alaska Natives are less likely to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer at the earliest, localized stage, and more likely to be diagnosed at the distant (most advanced) stage, compared to whites and Asian Americans. Patients diagnosed at the local stage have a 90% survival rate, while those diagnosed at the distant stage have a 10% survival rate. Through lifestyle changes and regular screening, you can lower your risk of developing colorectal cancer.

For more information, visit:
American Cancer Society:
<http://www.cancer.org/docroot/home/index.asp>

The Colon Cancer Alliance:
<http://www.ccalliance.org/>

Colorectal Cancer Network:
<http://www.colorectal-cancer.net/>

Stroke Awareness *(continued from page 1)*

Symptoms of a stroke include:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm, or leg, especially if it is only on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking
- Sudden vision problems in one or both eyes
- Sudden difficulty walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache without a known cause

The acronym FAST is often useful in helping people remember the signs of a stroke:

- F: Face—drooping of one side of the face
- A: Arms—weakness in one of the arms when raised
- S: Speech—slurred or strange speech
- T: Time—if any of the above symptoms are observed, call 911 immediately

For more information, visit:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/stroke/>

American Stroke Association

<http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/>

National Stroke Association

<http://www.stroke.org/>

Recreational Water Safety *By Lisa Nakagawa, MPH*

In the summertime, families spend more time near oceans, lakes, rivers and swimming pools. Recreational water activities are fun, but it is important to be safe, especially when children are near water. Please review the tips below to prevent drowning incidents and water related injuries.

- **Adult Supervision Near Water** - A responsible adult needs to be available to watch younger children at all times without distractions
- **Buddy System** – Have a friend, sibling or parent designated to watch their “buddy” play in the water



- **Swimming Lessons** – Formal swimming lessons can help increase children’s knowledge in water safety, however it is still important for parents to continue to provide proper supervision
- **Know the Weather and Water Conditions** – When conducting recreational activities in oceans, rivers and lakes it is important to know if rain or thunderstorms will be present, as they can cause dangerous water conditions
- **Wear Lifejackets** – Children and adults should wear lifejackets that fit properly and are approved by the US Coast Guard when boating (<http://www.uscgboating.org/news/default.aspx?ArticleId=233>)
- **Remove Trip Hazards** – Remove any possible tripping hazards around the swimming pool to prevent anybody from falling in or from further injury

New Food Icon By Beverly Calderon, RD, CDE

MyPlate is the new image that is replacing the Food Pyramid. It shows that nutrition doesn't have to be complicated. This new icon makes the nutrition message clearer, by using the symbol of a plate. It is divided into four slightly different-sized sections, with half of the plate for fruits and vegetables and the other half for grains and protein. For many people, the food pyramid has been difficult to understand. Providing something that is easy to understand can help individuals make nutritional decisions.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans were recently revised and released in January. They remind us to enjoy food, but balance calories by decreasing portion sizes. For adults, the majority of daily calorie needs should come from high quality carbohydrates (45-65%), fat (20-35%), and protein (10-35%). It is also recommended that people drastically reduce salt and limit saturated fats. Recently the Surgeon General Regina Benjamin said, "We know Americans want to be healthy, but making those healthy choices is not easy, it's hard." The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is trying to make it easier with MyPlate.

USDA, MyPlate:

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010:

<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2010/DietaryGuidelines2010.pdf>



Indian Health Service Early Childhood Caries Initiative By Steve Riggio, DDS

Early Childhood Caries (early tooth decay in children under age 6) is an infectious disease that can start as soon as an infant's teeth erupt. Early Childhood Caries (ECC) can progress rapidly and may have a lasting detrimental impact on a child's health and well-being. ECC is a serious health problem. The 1999 Oral Health Survey of American Indian and Alaska Native Dental Patients found that 79% of children between the ages of 2-5 years had experienced dental caries (decay), and 68% of this age group had untreated decay at the time of the examination. Prevention of ECC should begin with pregnant women. A mother's decay-causing bacteria can be transmitted to her child, so it is important for pregnant women to have her teeth checked for decay. It is also important for infants to have a dental visit as soon as the first tooth erupts.

The Indian Health Service Early Childhood Caries Initiative is a multi-faceted program designed to enhance

knowledge about early childhood caries prevention and early intervention among dental providers and the community. The initiative provides the entire healthcare team with the tools to begin a successful ECC program. Increasing access to oral health care and evidenced-based prevention is a collaboration effort that must include the oral health care team, medical providers, community health representatives, Head Start staff, and Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program staff.

This past year an ECC packet was developed and distributed to 322 dental programs throughout the country. A basic screening survey (BSS) was conducted from August – December 2010 to establish baseline ECC data-prevalence of disease and untreated tooth decay rates. A total of 8,461, 0-5 year-old children were screened during the BSS. These screenings were conducted in various community settings. Over 200 dental health professional from 65 dental

programs across the IHS participated in the collection of these data. The results, which will soon be released, should help your community to better address the epidemic levels of early childhood caries.



Tooth decay