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5 Interesting Facts About Stroke and Diabetes

Diabetes is one of the leading causes of death in the world. It can cause many health complications and is known to increase the risk of stroke. (1) But the level

of risk is influenced by a number of factors, including the type of diabetes, a person's age, sex and where they live. Here are a few interesting facts about diabetes and stroke:

1. **Diabetics are 1.5 times more likely to have a stroke**

Excess blood sugar has a devastating effect on all the blood vessels in the body, especially the brain. In fact, diabetic patients are around 1.5 times more susceptible to a stroke event. The risk of stroke increases in those who have other health problems, such as high cholesterol, and also increase with age, nearly doubling for each decade over the age of 55. (2). The International Diabetes Federation has predicted that the number of people with diabetes will rise 50% by 2030. (1)

2. **Around 90% of diabetic stroke happens to people with Type 2 diabetes**

There are three different types of diabetes. Type 1 is usually diagnosed in childhood or during teenage years. This occurs when your body can't produce any insulin and often runs in families. Type 2 develops when your body can't produce enough insulin or doesn't react to it in the right way. This tends to affect older adults. The third type is gestational diabetes, which occurs during pregnancy and often resolves on its own. Around 90% of people with diabetes have Type 2. Therefore, it's no surprise that the majority of diabetic strokes happen to this group of patients (3).

3. **Both types of diabetes carry a risk for stroke**

Despite the fact that more people in the world have Type 2 diabetes than Type 1, all types of diabetes are associated with an increased risk of stroke. The cardiovascular system comprises the heart and all the blood vessels that pump and move blood around your body, including those that control blood flow to your brain. Individuals with Type 1 diabetes are more likely to suffer coronary heart disease and peripheral arterial disease. While those with Type 2 diabetes are

more likely to have obesity, large artery atherosclerosis and stroke (3). Mothers with gestational diabetes also have a higher risk of stroke later in life. (4)

4. **Risk of stroke increases with poor blood sugar control**

The causes and risk factors for Type 1 diabetes remain unknown and there are currently no prevention strategies. But, thanks to the discovery of insulin, people with Type 1 have found an effective way to keep their diabetes under control. Problems arise when blood sugar levels rise to excessive levels, because this can cause a build-up of fats or deposits inside vessels that supply the neck and brain, leading to ischaemic or ischaemic and haemorrhagic stroke (5).

5. **Diabetes is set to increase by 69% in developing countries**

The number of people with diabetes is expected to increase to 578 million worldwide by 2030. The prevalence is higher in urban rather than rural areas and in high-income, rather than low-income, countries. One in two people don't know they have diabetes yet just under half a billion people are living with it worldwide. This is set to increase by 25% in the next ten years and by 51% by 2045 (6).

Listening to the facts about diabetes and stroke can be concerning. But it's important to remember that Type 2 diabetes, the most common of all, is largely preventable by making a few lifestyle changes. Stop smoking, eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly to help keep your blood sugar levels under control and reduce your risk of Type 2 diabetes and stroke.

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