

Stroke Prevention in Memory Loss

Memory loss in some people is caused by small strokes. The lack of blood flow to small parts of the brain may be a part of the memory and behavior problems that people have with dementia. Many of these people have been diagnosed as having “Alzheimer’s disease with cerebrovascular disease.”

Strategies That Prevent Stroke

Here are some strategies that can help prevent stroke:

- **Taking aspirin.** Small amounts of aspirin change blood clotting. Taking a daily dose of aspirin is the most common method for preventing stroke.
- **Lowering blood pressure.** The treatment of high blood pressure prevents strokes. Systolic hypertension is the most common form of high blood pressure affecting older people.
- **Lowering blood cholesterol levels.** High levels of cholesterol are known to increase a person’s risk of stroke. A low-fat diet and exercise are two good ways to lower your cholesterol level.
- **Taking anticoagulants.** Persons with specific heart conditions can benefit from the thinning of the blood with certain drugs.
- **Treating arterial blockage.** Some people with blockage of the large arteries to the brain (the “carotids”) benefit from surgery to open these blood vessels. An ultrasound (sonar) test can determine if arteries are blocked.

The doctor is the best person to give advice about the use of one or more of these treatments for a person with memory loss.