

## Quickly finding the cause of a stroke may prevent more

By AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION NEWS  
VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Identifying the cause of a stroke or mini-stroke within 48 hours could help pinpoint the treatment to help prevent additional strokes, new guidelines say.

The recommendations from the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, published Monday in the journal *Stroke*, are an update to guidelines issued in 2014. The AHA regularly releases science-based guidelines that give best practices for health care professionals to prevent and treat heart disease and stroke.

Having a first stroke or transient ischemic attack, also called a TIA or mini-stroke, increases a person's chances of having additional strokes. The new guidelines call for diagnostic testing within 48 hours of the onset of stroke symptoms so individualized treatment can help prevent a second stroke.

"It is critically important to understand the best ways to prevent another stroke once someone has had a stroke or a TIA," Dr. Dawn Kleindorfer, chair of the guideline writing group, said in a news release. Kleindorfer is a professor and chair of the department of neurology at the University of Michigan School of Medicine in Ann Arbor. "If we can pinpoint the cause of the first stroke or TIA, we can tailor strategies to prevent a second stroke."

Ischemic strokes account for 87% of strokes in the United States. They happen when arteries get blocked with blood clots or plaque, preventing blood from flowing to the brain. This can cause serious disability or death. Blockages that occur for only a short period of time cause TIAs, which do not lead to permanent brain injury.

Research shows advances in stroke prevention have reduced stroke recurrence rates, from 8.7% in the 1960s to 5% in the 2000s. However, among people who survive first strokes, many stroke risk factors remain poorly managed.

The new recommendations include guidance for how to treat strokes based on the cause. Such causes could include blockages in the large arteries in the neck or brain; damage to small arteries in the brain from high blood pressure or diabetes; and irregular heart rhythms.

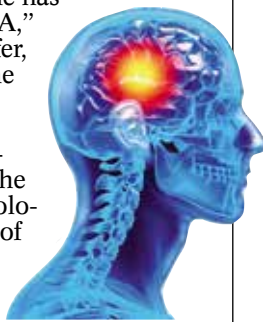
The guidelines recommend people who have had a first stroke to carefully manage their vascular risk factors, such as high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, cholesterol and triglyceride levels. They also encourage not smoking, limiting salt and eating a Mediterranean diet, which is high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, olive oil, beans, nuts and seeds and low to moderate amounts of dairy, eggs, fish and poultry.

For people who are capable of physical activity, the guidelines call for moderate-intensity aerobic activity for at least 10 minutes four times each week, or vigorous-intensity aerobic activity for at least 20 minutes twice a week.

"In fact, approximately 80% of strokes can be prevented by controlling blood pressure, eating a healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, not smoking and maintaining a healthy weight," Dr. Amytis Towfighi, vice-chair of the guideline writing group, said in the release. Towfighi is director of neurological services at the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services.

The update also recommends using a multi-disciplinary team to personalize treatment plans that incorporate the patient's wishes, goals and concerns; screening for atrial fibrillation, a type of irregular heart rhythm; prescribing medications to prevent blood clots to all stroke survivors, unless there's a specific reason not to; and clearing blocked arteries in the neck using surgery or stents.

For people whose strokes were caused by severe narrowing of arteries leading to the brain, the guidelines call for aggressive medical management of stroke risk factors and the short-term use of aspirin combined with another drug to prevent clotting. People whose strokes were caused by a fairly common heart defect called patent foramen ovale may need minor surgery to prevent a second stroke.



## Exercise in short bursts for longevity

Fitness apps and electronic counters make it easy to do

By AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION NEWS  
VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taking more steps each day may help you live longer, whether those steps occur in short bursts throughout the day or all at once, new research finds.

The preliminary research was presented recently at the American Heart Association's virtual Epidemiology, Prevention, Lifestyle & Cardiometabolic Health Conference.

"With the help of wearable devices, more research is indicating that any type of movement

is better than remaining sedentary," lead researcher Christopher Moore said in a news release. Moore is a Ph.D. student in epidemiology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Adults should get at least 150 minutes per week of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity, or a combination of both, AHA guidelines say. Moore's study found the more people moved each day, the longer they lived — whether that activity took place during short, sporadic bursts of daily activities, such as climbing stairs or doing housework, or uninterrupted periods of exercise that were 10 minutes or longer.

Popular fitness apps and step counters make it easy to tally steps, so researchers used a wearable step-counting device to compare physical activity levels. The study included nearly 17,000 women over age 60 who were followed for six years.

Short bursts and uninterrupted bouts were both beneficial. Each initial increase of 1,000 steps per day in short bursts was associated with a 28% decrease in death during the follow-up period, with benefits leveling off at about 4,500 steps a day. Those who took more than 2,000 uninterrupted steps daily saw a 32% decrease in death.

"Older adults face many barriers to participating in structured exercise programs, so some may find it more convenient and enjoyable to increase everyday walking behaviors, like parking slightly further from their destination or doing some extra housework or yard work," he said.

Since all participants were older and mostly non-Hispanic white women, more research is needed to determine if the results apply to men, younger women and people from diverse racial and ethnic groups.



News Record Photos/Jake Goodrick

During a recent doubles pickleball match, Isayah Wiltz, 26, right, joins his partner close to the net to return a volley at the Campbell County Recreation Center.

## Brine over brawn

As pickleball grows in popularity, the sport grows on players

By JAKE GOODRICK \* NEWS RECORD WRITER  
jgoodrick@gillette newsrecord.net

As the sport pickleball has gained somewhat of a cult following in Gillette, a community of its own has developed around the beginner-friendly game. Now, once-strangers in the city of various ages and walks of life find a common bond in the relatively new paddle sport.

"Once you make a pickleball friend, it crosses all barriers," said Kerry Richardson, who has been playing the sport for about two years.

"No matter your religious affiliations, or political affiliations, everyone just has a good time," he said.

Pickleball has gained a reputation nationally for being one of the fastest growing sports in the country. Given its low barriers to entry, it is a sport essentially anybody can play.

Most often, the sport is described as a hybrid of tennis and pingpong. Players compete in either singles or doubles matches, like tennis, but the other sports bleed into the game from there. The paddles are more akin to pingpong and the ball is similar to a whiffle ball with holes in it that give it resistance as it glides through the air.

Then, basically, players just hit the ball back and forth over a net and have fun. Jerry Cotton, 58, has lived in Gillette his whole life but only began playing pickleball about two years ago.

"It's a little like playing golf," he said. "It's a sport anybody can play."

Cotton is part of a group of 20-or-so pickleball players in Gillette who regularly play pick-up matches together. As the sport's popularity has grown over the past couple of years, the players organize their matches through a GroupMe chat.

The casual matches are usually Wednesday nights and Sunday afternoons, either at the Campbell County Recreation



Kerry Richardson, 65, returns a ball over the net during a pickleball match at the Campbell County Recreation Center.

Center or the Bicentennial Park tennis courts.

And they're always welcoming of new players, especially in Gillette, where even the most experienced pickleballers are relative newcomers to the game.

### Its Gillette origin

How it got to Gillette, like any good urban legend, is up for debate. Depending on who you ask, Neil Allen, 63, had a hand in introducing Campbell County to pickleball.

"Probably about six years ago is when we found it in Minnesota and brought it

back here," Allen said.

As the story goes, he was in Minnesota with his wife visiting family for Thanksgiving when they stumbled upon pickleball games at the local YMCA.

"We were done working out and we asked the gal where the gym was. We started walking that way and we heard this sound," Allen said. "We're like, 'What the hell is that?'"

"We walk in and there's 30 people playing pickleball. I was like, 'Oh, this is cool!' It's like pingpong and tennis."