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Cornerstone of Health

Dr. Sheila Pinette, Director of Maine CDC



Stroke, the fourth leading cause of death in Maine, occurs when part of the brain cannot get the blood and oxygen it needs so it begins to die.

Dr. Sheila Pinette

Risk factors for stroke include:

- Family history of stroke
- Increasing age
- Ethnicity (African Americans have a higher risk)
- Being overweight or obese
- Smoking
- Physical inactivity
- High Blood Pressure
- Diabetes
- High Cholesterol

Talk to your doctor about making lifestyle changes (healthy diet, increase physical activity) and medications that can help reduce your risk of stroke.

Call 911 at once if someone shows these symptoms:

- Numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg
- Slurred speech
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness or loss of balance
- Severe headache

For more information:

- ◇ [Maine CDC- Cardiovascular Health Program](#)
- ◇ [U.S. CDC Division of Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention](#)

Prevent Adult-Onset Occupational Asthma

Isocyanates (eye-so-sigh-a-nates) are chemicals that can cause asthma and cancer, irritate the skin, eyes, nose and throat, and even cause death. It is important for employers to know the health risks of isocyanates and know that people who work in certain industries are in danger of being exposed. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has announced an emphasis program to protect workers from exposure to isocyanates.

People potentially exposed to isocyanates may have:

- Ongoing or recurring eye irritation
- Nasal congestion
- Dry or sore throat
- Cold-like symptoms
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Chest-tightness

Direct skin contact can cause sensitivity, redness, rash, itching, hives and swelling. Isocyanates are found in the following compounds: paints, varnishes, foams, and sealants.

They are used in:

- Residential/commercial construction to coat cement, wood, fiberglass, steel and aluminum
- Automotive painting and spray on bed-liners
- Commercial manufacturing of ridged and flexible foams
- Boatbuilding coatings to protect boats

Isocyanates are powerful irritants to the eyes, gastrointestinal, and respiratory tracts. Isocyanates can sensitize a worker through skin contact. This means a worker could have a severe asthma attack if they come into contact again (death from severe asthma in some sensitized subjects has been reported). Isocyanates cannot easily be washed off skin or clothing.

OSHA hopes that attention to this problem will raise awareness of the risk, reduce employee exposure, and lessen the negative health effects of isocyanates. For more on the National Emphasis Program [click here](#).



Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

Know Your Numbers: Blood Pressure

About 1 in 3 Mainers is diagnosed with high blood pressure, also known as hypertension. Blood Pressure is the force of blood on the walls of your blood vessels as blood flows through them. Blood pressure is measured using two numbers. The top number measures the pressure when your heart beats. The bottom number measures the pressure when your heart rests.

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms. Many people may not know that they have it. When left untreated it can cause a heart attack, stroke, kidney failure and other serious illness.

People are more likely to have high blood pressure if they:

- Are 55 years and older
- Have a family history of high blood pressure
- Have diabetes
- Are overweight or obese
- Eat a poor diet, including food too high in sodium (salt)
- Do not get enough exercise
- Use tobacco products
- Drink too much alcohol

What can employers do?

Employers can play a big role in helping individuals learn how to manage or to prevent high blood pressure. Examples of what employers can do to promote a healthier workplace are:

- Partner with state or local health departments and community organizations to develop policies and working conditions that includes employee screening and follow-up
- Provide health insurance coverage with no or low out-of-pocket costs for medications that help to control high blood pressure
- Encourage employees to “Know Their Numbers” for blood pressure and if high, encourage them to talk with their doctor
- Have a written policy banning tobacco use in the workplace
- Increase availability of lower sodium, healthy foods
- Provide physical activity programs for employees (walking or stretching programs, group exercise, weight training)
- Provide resources for high blood pressure, prehypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, signs and symptoms of a heart attack and stroke, tobacco cessation, healthy eating, and physical activity

Million Hearts Initiative

Million Hearts® is a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. Million Hearts® brings together communities, health systems, nonprofit organizations, federal agencies, and private-sector partners from across the country to fight heart disease and stroke. To learn more about the initiative or to make the commitment visit:

www.millionhearts.hhs.gov.

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May Health Observances

- ◆ [Global Employee Health & Fitness Month](#)
- ◆ [Healthy Vision Month](#)
- ◆ [Mental Health Month](#)
- ◆ [National Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [UV Safety Month](#)
- ◆ [National Stroke Awareness Month](#)

June Health Observances

- ◆ [Men’s Health Month](#)
- ◆ [National Safety Month](#)
- ◆ [Men’s Health Week](#) (9-15)
- ◆ [National Lightening Safety Awareness Week](#) (22-28)

Additional Resources



American Heart Association | **American Stroke Association®**



1-800-207-1230

THE MAINE TOBACCO HELPLINE





Department of Health and Human Services

Maine People Living Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives

Paul R. LePage, Governor
Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner