

[IMAGE]

30 Minutes a Day May Keep Strokes Away

By Staff Editorial

As little as half an hour a day of moderate exercise may reduce your risk of suffering a stroke, say researchers at the University of South Carolina's Prevention Research Center. That's good news because stroke is the nation's third leading cause of death. It occurs when blood flow to the brain is stopped when a blood vessel is blocked by a clot or bursts.

The research was presented recently at the International Stroke Conference in New Orleans. Researchers studied more than 61,000 adults at the Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas. After taking an initial treadmill test to assess fitness, study participants periodically answered health surveys. The study divided subjects into four levels of fitness and then looked at how many of them suffered strokes, following them for an average of 18 years. Overall, there were 863 stroke events during the study: 692 in men and 171 in women.

- Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark The study found that the most fit men had a 40 percent lower risk of stroke than the least fit men, while the most fit women had a 43 percent reduction in their risk of stroke compared with women in the least fit group. For moderate levels of fitness, the risk reduction ranged from 15 percent to 30 percent for men and 23 percent to 57 percent in women. These risk reductions held true even when considering other known risk factors for stroke, such as smoking, weight, high blood pressure, diabetes and family history.

The message from all this is that it doesn't take much to reduce your risk of stroke. Whether it's taking the dog for a walk or riding your bike to the corner market, a little daily exercise can do you a whole world of good.

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