

Join Atrium Health Navicent in Recognizing National Stroke Month *Central Georgians are at an increased risk for stroke*

MACON, Ga., May 22, 2023 – Atrium Health Navicent invites the community to participate in a 10-day Stroke Wellness Challenge in observance of National Stroke Month this May.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), someone in the United States has a stroke every 40 seconds. Every 3.5 minutes, someone dies of stroke. Every year in the U.S., about 795,000 people suffer a stroke, and about 610,000 of these are first-time strokes.

Central Georgians are at an increased risk for stroke due to the prevalence of common risk factors that include high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and tobacco use. Georgia is in the “Stroke Belt,” an area in the Southeastern United States where stroke deaths are approximately 30 percent higher than the rest of the country. In 2020, Georgia held the 8th highest stroke death rate in the country.

By participating in Atrium Health Navicent’s 10-day Stroke Wellness Challenge between May 22 and May 31, individuals can learn more about how to prevent a stroke, recognize the signs and symptoms that someone is having a stroke, and begin to live a healthier lifestyle:

May 22: Take time to learn the signs and symptoms of stroke and what to do if you suspect someone is having a stroke.

- B – Balance loss (Is the person suddenly having trouble with balance or coordination?)
- E – Eyesight changes (Is the person having sudden blurred or double vision in one or both eyes?)
- F – Facial weakness (Can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?)
- A – Arm or leg weakness (Can the person raise both arms?)
- S – Speech difficulty (Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?)
- T – Time to act (Seek medical attention immediately!)

May 23: Focus on stretching, which can help reduce stress and tension, and have a positive effect on overall health. Stretching can also offer great benefits for stroke survivors such as preventing joint stiffness, muscle shortening, decreasing spastic movements and improving general function.

May 24: Swap your snack for a healthier alternative which can help reduce weight, a stroke risk factor. Try apples, carrots, nuts or seeds for crunchy cravings or more filling snacks like whole-grain toast with peanut or almond butter, cherry tomatoes with hummus or cheese that’s low in fat or fat-free.

May 25: Strengthen your core to improve balance. If you’re new to core strengthening, begin your workout slowly. Experts at [Atrium Health Navicent Wellness Center](#) can help you begin a program based on your individual needs. Benefits of physical activity for stroke recovery also may include improved mobility, walking and balance; improved mental function; reduced risk of stroke recurrence and a reduced risk of falls.

May 26: Take a few minutes to show gratitude and think about the positive things in your life. Positive thinking and being grateful has been shown to improve sleep, decrease depression, lower blood pressure, improve immune function and improve overall health.

May 27: Try a 10-minute home workout. Even 10 minutes of exercise can improve brain health, strengthen bones, lower blood pressure, lift your mood and improve your sleep.

May 28: Stay hydrated. Keeping the body hydrated helps the heart to more easily pump blood through blood vessels to the muscles, and it helps muscles work efficiently. Common symptoms of dehydration include: thirst, less-frequent urination, light-headedness and dizziness.

May 29: Reduce stress. Although we all experience stress, we need to work on controlling negative stress which can increase blood pressure and heart rate, elevate stress hormones and increase the risk for heart attack and stroke. Try one of the following stress-lowering activities today: Go for a walk, try a quick meditation, read a book or magazine, color or work on an art project, yoga, break down big problems into smaller parts, or engage in positive self-talk (instead of saying “I can’t do this,” say “I’ll do the best I can!”)

May 30: Add mini squats to your workout routine to strengthen your legs, build balance and reduce falls. Remember to start slowly and gradually work up the number of repetitions each day.

May 31: Take time to learn what you can do to reduce your risk of stroke by:

- Assessing your risk by taking the American Stroke Association’s Check, Change Control Calculator at <https://ccccalculator.ccctracker.com/>
- Eat a healthy diet
- Be physically active
- Watch your weight
- Live tobacco-free
- Manage your medical conditions
- Take medicine as prescribed by your doctor or other medical provider
- Be a team player to work with your health care team to make healthy changes part of your stroke prevention plan.

“We encourage everyone to participate in Atrium Health Navicent’s 10-day Stroke Wellness Challenge to learn more about stroke risk, how to recognize the signs and symptoms of a stroke, and to consider making simple lifestyle changes that can reduce stroke risk,” said Dr. Naomi Kirkman-Bey, Atrium Health Navicent’s stroke program interim director.

In addition to being recognized as a “high performing” stroke center by U.S. News & World Report, Atrium Health Navicent The Medical Center is a 12-time recipient of the “Get with the Guidelines – Stroke Gold Plus” Quality Achievement Award, an annual award presented by the American Heart Association (AHA) and American Stroke Association for excellence in stroke care. The health system earned the award by meeting specific quality achievement measures for the diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients at a set level for a designated period.

Atrium Health Navicent was named to AHA’s “Target: Stroke Honor Roll” in 2022. The Honor Roll recognizes the hospital’s commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines based on the latest scientific evidence.

For the third consecutive year, Atrium Health Navicent has been named to AHA’s “Target Type 2 Diabetes” Honor Roll, which recognizes hospitals that are taking steps to help stroke patients control and manage Type 2 diabetes, a well-established risk factor for stroke.

To find a doctor, visit www.NavicentHealth.org and click “Find A Doctor.”

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of Advocate Health, which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the fifth-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation’s leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.