

Did you know?

Memorial Day was initially known as Decoration Day, beginning with the American Civil War. It's thought that the tradition of honoring the dead was inspired by Southern states, who decorated the graves of both Confederate and Union soldiers with flowers, wreaths, and flags.

America's need to honor its military dead became more important, as cities and towns throughout the US erected monuments and held ceremonies centered around decorating soldiers' graves. After World War I, Decoration Day included all fallen soldiers, not just those from the Civil War, and the term "Memorial Day" began being used. By World War II, states began to adopt resolutions to make it an official holiday.

An act of Congress in 1971 made Memorial Day an official national holiday, being celebrated on May 30th. The Uniform Monday Holiday Act also took effect in 1971, and Memorial Day is one of the federal holidays that was moved to Monday set to occur on the last Monday in May.

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Quabbin Health District Public Health Nurse Newsletter

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Did you know that 1 in 5 Americans will experience a diagnosable mental health condition this year?

One significant reason people don't seek treatment for mental health or substance use disorder is stigma. Stigma is "a set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have" (Brittanica, 2024). There are three types of stigma:

- **Public stigma:** negative or discriminatory attitudes that others may have about mental illness.
- **Self-stigma** refers to the negative attitudes, including internalized shame, that people with mental illness may have about their own condition.
- **Structural stigma** is more systemic, involving policies of government and private organizations that intentionally or unintentionally limit opportunities for people with mental illness. Examples include lower funding for mental illness research or fewer mental health services relative to other health care.

What can I do?

Think twice about the language you may use, why or where you learned it, and what impact it can have on someone who could use your support.

Say This:	Not This:
I'm concerned about you, and I want you to know that help is available to get you through this.	Cheer up; I'm sure it will pass.
They are a person with bipolar disorder...	"They're bipolar"
I just can't do enough....	I'm proud of myself for accomplishing...
Suffering from/struggling with a mental illness	Living with a mental illness/experiencing a mental illness
Person with a substance use disorder	Addict/junkie/drunk

The most important way to support someone is to remember they are a person first, and their mental health or substance use doesn't define them.

Help is available!

MA Behavioral Health Helpline – confidential, 24/7, including holidays.

- Chat online at www.masshelpline.com, call or text 833-773-2445.

MA Substance Use Helpline – confidential, 24/7.

- Online at helplineMA.org, call 800-327-5050, text 800327.

MA Overdose Prevention Helpline – Confidential, 24/7

- Online at massoverdosehelpline.org, Call 800-972-0590

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline – Confidential, 24/7

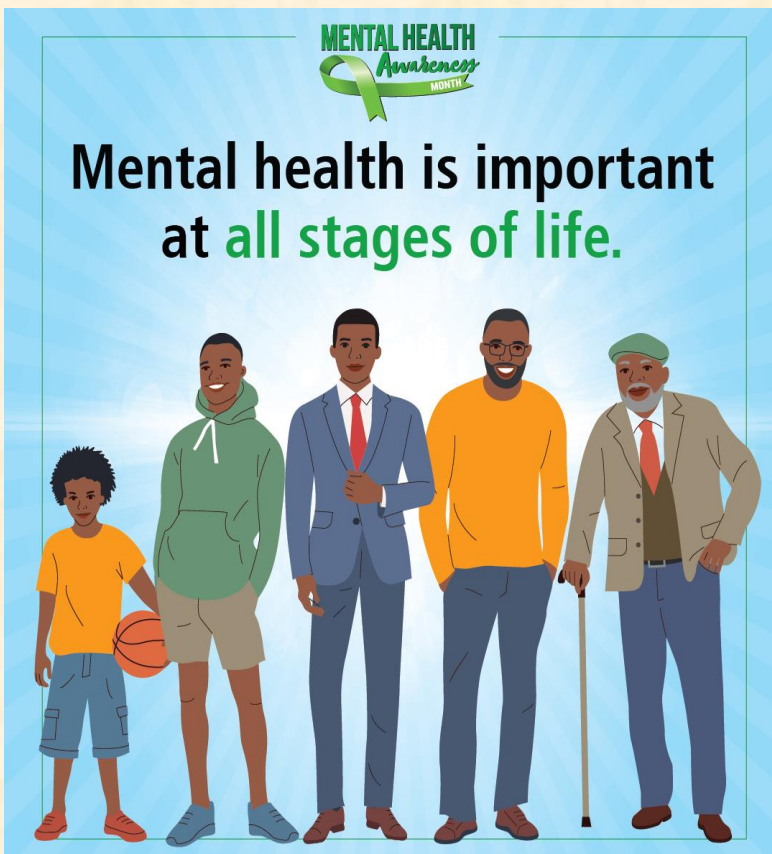
- Chat online at 988lifeline.org, call or text 988.

413 Cares – Western MA help and local resources

- Online at 413cares.org

Find Help – Search for help and resources by zip code in Massachusetts.

- Online findhelp.org.



Age joyfully! Consider your passions and interests and pursue something that brings you happiness and fulfillment. Remember that mental health support is available to you if you need it. Visit samhsa.gov/resources-serving-older-adults to learn more. #MHAM2024

MAY IS AMERICAN STROKE MONTH

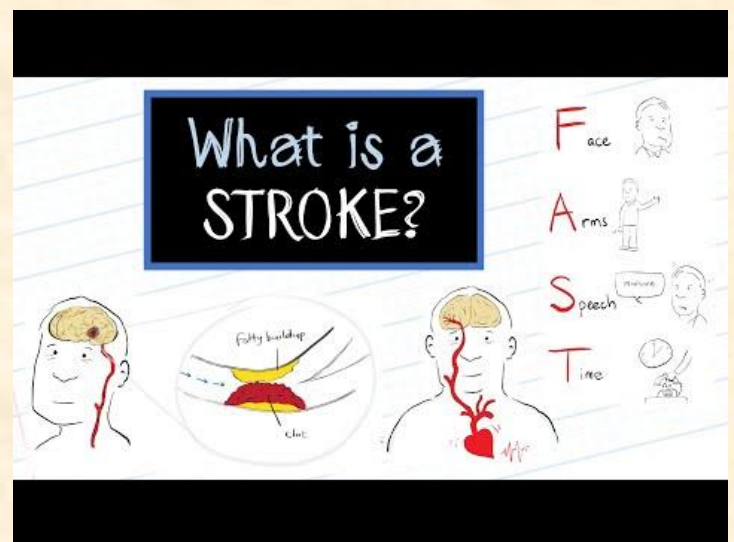
SPOT A STROKE™



Stroke.org

Every 40 seconds, someone in the U.S. has a stroke.

Check out this short video if you'd like to learn more about strokes:



Know the Symptoms of a Stroke

Early recognition is the key to proper stroke treatment.
Thinking **FASTER** might help you save a life.

F Face Uneven smile. One side of the face droops or is numb.

A Arms One arm drifts down when raising both or is weaker and more numb than other.

S Stability Dizziness. Hard time keeping balance. Trouble walking. Loss of coordination.

T Talking Slurred words. Unable to speak. Hard time being understood or understanding speech.

E Eyes Difficulty seeing out of one or both eyes. Double vision.

R React **Call 911 immediately!** Call even if symptoms go away. Remember when symptoms first began.



How Can I Lower my Risk of Stroke?

- 1. Lower blood pressure:** High blood pressure is the largest contributor to stroke risk in both men and women. Regularly monitoring blood pressure and, if it is consistently more than 130/90, seeing your doctor and treating it, is one of the biggest differences people can make in their vascular health.
- 2. Increase activity/exercise:** Try to perform moderate activity for at least 30 minutes, 5 times per week. This can include walking, taking the stairs, yardwork, housework, dancing, or other activities you enjoy.
- 3. Limit processed foods:** Processed foods, including those with high amounts of sodium, contribute to chronic health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes and increase risk of stroke. Consult your primary care provider or a dietician for a healthy diet specific to your needs.
- 4. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation:** An average of one drink per day or less will decrease stroke risk. A standard-sized drink is a 5-ounce glass of wine, 12-ounce beer, or 1.5-ounce glass of hard liquor.
- 5. Treat atrial fibrillation:** Atrial fibrillation is a form of irregular heartbeat that causes clots in the heart. Those clots can travel to the brain, producing a stroke. Atrial fibrillation increases stroke risk five times and should be monitored regularly with your primary care provider.
- 6. Manage diabetes:** Having high blood sugar damages blood vessels over time, making clots more likely to form inside them. Take diabetes medications as prescribed, decrease sugar and processed foods in your diet, and monitor blood sugars daily.
- 7. Quit smoking:** Smoking accelerates clot formation in a couple of different ways. It thickens your blood, and it increases the amount of plaque buildup in the arteries. Smoking cessation is one of the most powerful lifestyle changes that will reduce your stroke risk significantly. Speak with your primary care provider about strategies to quit smoking. 1-800-QUIT-NOW offers free telephone-based counseling, texting, and online resources for patients 12 and older who want to quit or cut down their tobacco/nicotine use, with the addition of nicotine replacement therapy (nicotine patch, gum, or lozenge) for patients 18 and older.