



Addressing Rural Health Needs

Stroke Prevention in Haldimand and Norfolk

1. What do we know about stroke in Canada?

- In 2004, stroke was the third leading cause of death in Canada.
- Each year, more than 14,000 Canadians die from stroke.
- Every year, there are more than 50,000 strokes that occur in Canada.
- On average, a stroke occurs every 10 minutes in Canada.

2. What is stroke?

Stroke is the interruption of blood flow to the brain due to a blood clot or a blood vessel rupture.

3. What are the modifiable risk factors for stroke?

1. High blood pressure.
2. High blood cholesterol.
3. Heart disease atrial fibrillation.
4. Diabetes.
5. Being overweight.
6. Excessive alcohol consumption.
7. Physical inactivity.
8. Smoking.
9. Stress.

4. What do we know about stroke in Haldimand and Norfolk?

- Deaths and hospitalizations from stroke are higher in Haldimand and Norfolk compared to Ontario (55 years and older).

5. What did we do?

- The Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit along with the Stroke Prevention Advisory Committee, and the Regional Stroke Centre and Stroke Prevention Clinic of Hamilton developed *The Step Up to a Healthier You* program and evaluated it.
- *The Step Up to a Healthier You* program is a primary stroke prevention program that focuses on education and skill building.
- Education was provided by a multidisciplinary team including a Dietitian, Health Promoters, Nurses, Pharmacists and Fitness Leaders.
- Topics included: physical activity, healthy eating, blood pressure and blood cholesterol, smoking cessation, alcohol in moderation and stress reduction.
- The program was offered in a class setting and is now accessible to anyone online at www.stepuptohealthieryou.com

6. How do we know if the program was effective?

Participants completed a survey before the program, at the end of the program, 1 month after the program and 3 months after the program.

7. What did we want to find out? If participants.....

- Increased their level of stroke knowledge after attending the program.
- Increased their intake of vegetables and fruit and consumed at least 7 servings of vegetables and fruit a day.
- Increased their current level of physical activity and engaged in physical activity for 150 minutes a week.
- Improved or maintained a healthy blood pressure of less than 140 mm Hg/90 mm Hg after attending the program.



8. What did we find out from the study?

- The program in a rural community was effective in improving knowledge about stroke and behavioural changes in the area of nutrition, specifically the consumption of vegetables and fruit, and physical activity.
- The proportion of participants who achieved a healthy blood pressure of less than 140 mm Hg/90 mm Hg did not increase after the program.

9. What did we find out about developing a stroke program in a rural community?

- Maximize rural health assets.
- Minimize rural health challenges.
- Foster a collaborative community approach.
- Use the Social Determinants of Health framework to guide your program.

The full report, Stroke Prevention in a Rural Community in Haldimand and Norfolk can be found on the Haldimand-Norfolk website at http://www.hnhu.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1114&Itemid=82

Partial funding by the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion.

For more information about the report, please contact Deanna Morris, Epidemiologist, Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit at (519) 426-6170 Ext. 3215.

For information about *The Step Up to a Healthier You* program, please contact Jill Steen, Program Coordinator, Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit at (519) 426-6170 Ext. 3238.



Simcoe

P.O. Box 247, 12 Gilbertson Drive
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4L1
519.426.6170 / 905.318.6623

Caledonia

282 Argyle Street South
Caledonia, ON N3W 1K7
905.318.5367

Email: info@hnhu.org

Web: www.hnhu.org