

Hometown Hospital

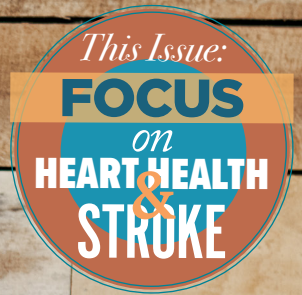
my Hometown health

Winter 2023

hometownhospital.com

**YOUR 4-MINUTE
GUIDE TO HEART
HEALTH**

**TIMELINE
OF A STROKE**



*Randy
Travis*

**Country Music Legend
and Stroke Survivor**



Hometown
HOSPITAL



Overcoming the *Storms of Life*

**10 years after surviving a massive stroke,
Randy Travis shares his inspiring story
of perseverance and hope**

In 1986, Randy Travis became a country music superstar overnight with the release of *Storms of Life*, his debut album. Then, 27 years later, Randy faced a “storm of life” he could never have imagined when he suffered a near-fatal stroke. *My Hometown Health* recently spoke to Randy and his wife Mary Davis to let the seven-time Grammy winner share his heartfelt story of determination and hope.

The stroke occurred in July 2013. Were there any warning signs?

Randy: No, the stroke came out of the blue. There is no history of heart disease in my family, and two days before my stroke, I felt perfectly healthy. Then it all went downhill.

What happened?

Randy: I had worked out earlier in the day and was helping to pack our tour bus for a trip to Canada. I told Mary I wasn’t breathing well, and we went to the Emergency Room just to be safe. I was diagnosed with walking pneumonia and sent home with a nebulizer and some antibiotics. I couldn’t sleep and could hardly breathe at all. We went back to the ER, and they told me I had double pneumonia. Then I really took a turn for the worst. I was at Baylor Scott & White Hospital in Dallas when I flatlined. It took them two and a half minutes to get me back. I was put on life support and was in a coma for three days. That’s when they noticed I had suffered a stroke.

What were your options?

Mary: The doctors told me that Randy would die if we did nothing, but if they did operate, there was only a one percent chance he would survive. Seven different things would have to go perfectly during the three-hour surgery to relieve pressure on his brain. However, one

percent is better than zero percent, and Randy made it! He had so many opportunities to head up to heaven, but he just kept fighting. I think Duane Allen of the Oak Ridge Boys said it best: “The devil don’t want him and God’s not ready for him.”

What was the prognosis after the surgery?

Mary: When we left the hospital after six months, the doctors said Randy would be in and out of hospitals the rest of his life and probably be bedridden. Randy didn’t believe it and neither did I. For two and a half years, Randy did stroke rehab five hours a day. During that time, and even today, I have always been amazed at the positive attitude Randy has about everything—ever after all he has gone through.

Did doctors ever figure out what caused the initial breathing problems?

Mary: They think it was a case of viral cardiomyopathy, an infection that can shut down the heart and fill up the lungs in just 48 hours. Dr. Michael Mack said he thought Randy might have been



Above: Randy with his wife, Mary Davis
Right: Randy on stage at The Ryman Auditorium in Nashville

“I’ve found that the best therapy is doing the things that I love to do.”

exposed to a mold or spore about five weeks earlier when he was filming at an old feed and seed store in Louisiana. Four or five weeks is the time it takes for the mold or spur to incubate and become a virus.

What kind of support have you received from your fans and colleagues?

Randy: A lot! My fans have been incredible. I’ve received boxes and boxes of cards and letters. It has been almost 10 years since the stroke, and we still receive letters where people express their love and support and tell us how much my music has meant to them.



And now some people have crowned you the King of TikTok!

Randy: We got the idea from Zach Farnum (Randy’s publicist). When he mentioned it, we didn’t even know what TikTok was. We thought it had something to do with a grandfather clock. But then it took off like a rocket.

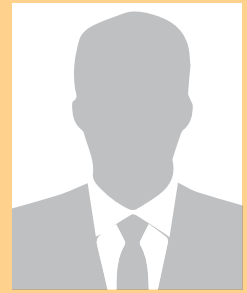
What does the future hold?

Randy: Well, I’ve found that the best therapy is doing the things that I love to do. So, I’m still on the road touring and going horseback riding. I’m just doing it a little differently now.

What have the last 10 years taught you?

Randy: Never give up hope. If the medical records say something will happen, it doesn’t mean it will. The healing power of the human body is amazing. ■

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



JOHN DOE, CEO

When Every Second Counts, We’re Your First Choice

During a heart attack, time is muscle. Fast treatment can prevent further heart damage and even save your life. During a stroke, time is brain. The quicker you recognize the symptoms of a stroke and seek medical care, the better the chances of preventing long-term disability or even death. In both cases, the faster you can get to an emergency room, the better. That makes Hometown Hospital your first choice when you or a loved one suffers a heart attack or stroke. Our ER team is ready 24/7, fully trained and fully equipped with the diagnostic imaging equipment and technology that can make a lifesaving difference. When every second counts, we’ll always be here.

► **To learn more, visit us at HometownHospital.com**



TimeLine of a Stroke

Every 40 seconds, someone in the United States suffers a stroke. That's almost 800,000 people a year, and of these, almost 140,000 die. Stroke is also a leading cause of serious long-term disability. For example, half of stroke survivors age 65 and older suffer reduced mobility. Yet having a stroke is not limited to the elderly. In fact, 38 percent of people hospitalized with a stroke are under age 65, and Randy Travis suffered his stroke when he was 54.

A stroke occurs when the brain doesn't receive the blood and oxygen it needs. About 87 percent of all strokes are *ischemic* strokes, in which blood flow to the brain is blocked. The other 13 percent are caused by a burst blood vessel, called a *hemorrhagic* stroke.

Time is precious when someone is having a stroke. Almost two million brain cells die every minute once a stroke begins. Receiving emergency care as fast as possible can make all the difference.

► The First Minute

Strokes happen fast. In just a few seconds, a person can go from feeling perfectly normal to slurring words or being unable to move an arm. At this point, knowing the signs of a stroke is critical. Use the **F.A.S.T.** warning signs to check yourself or someone else.

Face: Ask the person to smile to see if one side of the face droops.

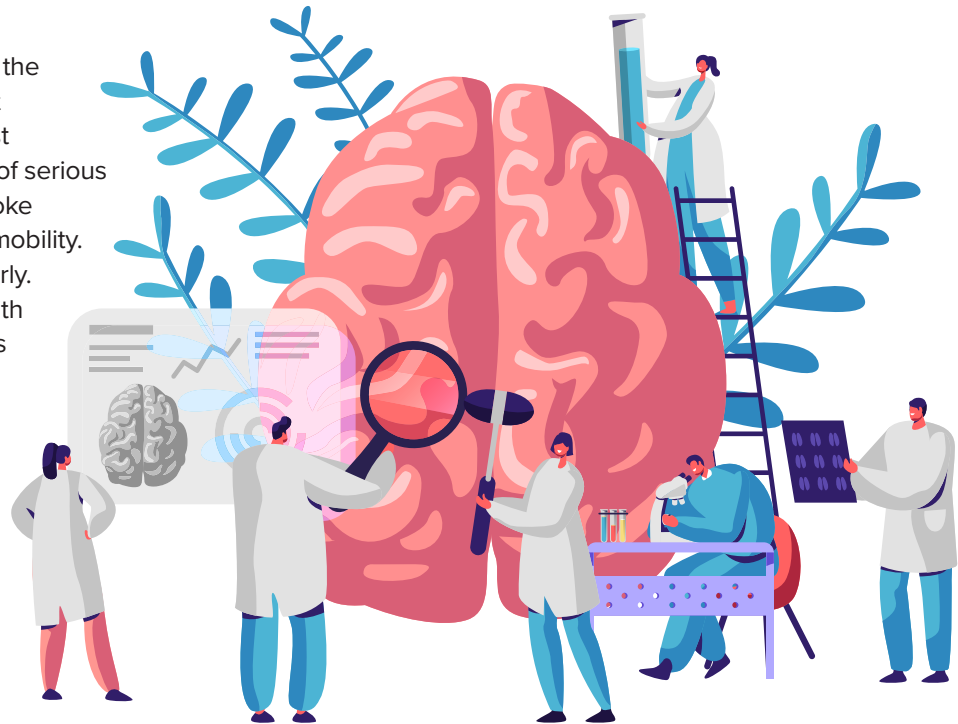
Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drop down?

Speech: Ask the person to say something, and check for slurred or strange speech.

Time: If the answer to any of these is "Yes," call 911 immediately. Here's why.

► The Golden Hour

Stroke patients have a much greater chance of surviving and avoiding long-term brain damage if they receive



treatment within the first hour. Time lost is brain lost. With each hour that passes, the brain loses as many neurons as 3.6 years of normal aging.

► When the Ambulance Arrives

Emergency personnel will quickly check to make sure the patient is breathing and has a pulse. They will also use the FAST warning signs to check for a stroke. They might check the patient's blood sugar level. If there are any signs of a stroke, the patient will be rushed to the nearest hospital, where the ER team will be standing by.

► At the Hospital

The stroke team jumps into action. Staff will ask the patient's loved ones about his or her symptoms and medical history. A CT Scan may be given to tell what kind of stroke is occurring. Blood tests are performed. Most importantly, if needed, the clot-dissolving drug TPA will be administered. All will be performed with great speed and efficiency, because during a stroke, time is everything.



John Doe, MD
Specialty

Sources: CDC, American Stroke Association

Understanding Cardiovascular Disease

More than 80 million Americans have some form of cardiovascular disease, a group of diseases that affects the heart and blood vessels. Sometimes called heart disease, cardiovascular disease can take many forms. Here are four of most common types.

1 Coronary Artery Disease

This common form of cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in America. It occurs when the arteries that supply blood to your heart become hardened and narrowed, usually caused by a buildup of fats and cholesterol. Symptoms are those of a heart attack (see page 6).

2 Stroke

A stroke occurs when the brain doesn't receive the blood and oxygen it needs. Symptoms often include slurred speech, confusion and sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body. Other symptoms include trouble speaking or understanding speech, trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance, or lack of coordination.

3 Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)

PAD is a long-term disease caused by the accumulation of fats and cholesterol in your legs and arms. Symptoms include coldness in the lower leg or foot and leg numbness or weakness.

4 Arrhythmia

An arrhythmia is a problem with the speed or rhythm of your heartbeat. The heart may beat too quickly, too slowly or have an irregular rhythm that feels like your heart is fluttering.

Your 3 Essential Heart-Health Screenings

The best way to prevent heart disease is to understand your risk factors. For this reason, it is so important to schedule an annual wellness exam with your primary care provider and have these three screenings performed.

High Blood Pressure

Also known as *hypertension*, high blood pressure occurs when the force of the blood pushing against the artery walls is consistently too high. If you are obese, smoke or have high cholesterol levels and your blood pressure is also high, your risk of a heart attack or stroke increases dramatically. High blood pressure is sometimes called the Silent Killer because it often produces no symptoms. Have your blood pressure checked regularly by your primary care provider.

High Blood Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in your blood. High cholesterol usually has no signs or symptoms. The only way to know if you have high cholesterol is to have a simple blood test performed by your primary care provider.

Diabetes

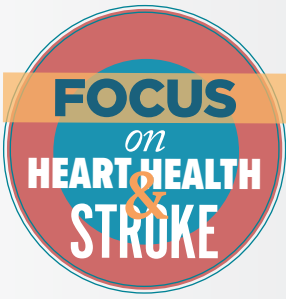
The leading cause of death for people with diabetes is heart problems. In fact, 65 percent of patients with diabetes die from some form of cardiovascular disease. Check for diabetes during your annual wellness exam and keep your blood sugar levels under control if you already have diabetes.

► To learn more, visit us at [HometownHospital.com](https://www.hometownhospital.com)

Sources: Cleveland Clinic, American Heart Association, cdc.gov



John Doe, MD
Specialty



Your Four-Minute Guide to Heart Health

The next four minutes could add years to your life. That's how long it will take you to read this article and discover the four essentials for taking care of your heart.

1 Live Heart Healthy

Don't Smoke: Not smoking may be the best thing you can do to improve both your heart health and your overall health. The results can be dramatic. After a year of not smoking cigarettes, the risk of heart disease is cut in half.

Get Moving: Regular physical exercise is so beneficial for your health. It reduces the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, Type 2 diabetes and stroke. It can also help you lose weight. Aim for 150 minutes a week of moderate exercise, such as walking, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous exercise, such as jogging. And remember, even activities like housekeeping or taking the stairs are good for you.

Eat Heart Smart: Avoid salt, sugar, alcohol, saturated fats (red meat, full-fat dairy) and trans fats (fried fast food, chips and baked goods). Instead, load up your plate with vegetables, fruits, beans, lean meat and fish, and whole grains.

Watch Your Pounds: Losing just a little weight really helps your heart. Reducing your weight by as little as three percent (just six pounds if you weigh 200) can reduce certain fats in the blood as well as the risk of diabetes. Ask your primary care provider to check your Body Mass Index (BMI) to see if you are overweight or obese. Ideally, your BMI should be less than 25.

Manage Your Stress: Feeling stressed can lead to many unhealthy habits, such as smoking, drinking or overeating. Regular physical activity as well as relaxing activities such as yoga can lower your stress level.

2 Know the Signs of a Heart Attack

Chest Pain or Discomfort: With most heart attacks, people experience uncomfortable pressure, squeezing or pain in the center of the chest. The sensation may last more than a few minutes, or it may go away and then return.

Discomfort in the Upper Body: Pain or discomfort can also occur in the neck, back, both arms or stomach.

Shortness of Breath: This can occur with or without chest pain.

Other Signs of a Heart Attack: These include nausea, feeling lightheaded and breaking out in a cold sweat. In addition to chest pain, women are more likely to experience shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, and back or neck pain.

3 Get Diagnosed

Your primary care provider can choose from a long list of diagnostic tools to determine if you have heart disease.

Electrocardiogram (ECG): An ECG tests your heart's electrical impulses. It is often used to check for an abnormal heart rhythm (arrhythmia).

Exercise Stress Test: This is a type of ECG test that is usually performed when running on a treadmill or riding a stationary bike. The test checks your heart rate, blood pressure and heart activity to see how it performs under physical exertion.

Echocardiogram (Ultrasound): This non-invasive test uses high-frequency sound waves to check the heart's structure and to evaluate its blood flow. It is often used to check your heart's valve and chambers as well as the efficiency of your heart in pumping blood.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI): An MRI uses powerful magnets and radio waves to produce hundreds of high-resolution images of the heart from many different perspectives. Sometimes a special dye is injected into the arteries to make the heart and its vessels easier to see.



John Doe, MD
Specialty

CT Scan: This X-ray imaging technique produces cross-sectional images of your heart to check its structure and determine if there are blockages in the coronary arteries.

Cardiac Catheterization: Also known as a coronary angiogram, this specialized X-ray test can reveal how much your coronary arteries are clogged or blocked. A small tube (catheter) is inserted into an artery in your groin or wrist and then moves up inside the artery until it reaches your heart. After a special dye has been injected, X-rays are taken.

Holter Monitoring: This test uses a small, portable machine to record a patient's heart rhythms over an extended period of time, usually from 24 to 48 hours. The test analyzes the electrical activity of the heart and can detect heart rhythm problems that come and go and may not be apparent using a standard ECG.

4 After a Heart Attack or Stroke, Participate in Rehab

Cardiac rehabilitation is a structured, supervised exercise and education program for people who have had bypass surgery, angioplasty, heart failure or other major heart conditions. The benefits of cardiac rehab are many. One study found that patients who completed a cardiac rehab program lowered their risk of death by 47 percent and their risk of having another heart attack by 31 percent. Unfortunately, only one in four people who are eligible for cardiac rehab participate in the program. The program usually lasts about three months and involves exercise training, emotional support and education about how to reduce the risk of heart disease. For stroke rehab, the long-term goal is to help the stroke survivor become as independent as possible. Studies show that up to 85 percent of patients will learn to walk independently after six months of rehabilitation.

► **To learn more or to schedule an appointment with a primary care provider, please visit [HometownHospital.com](https://www.hometownhospital.com).**

Sources: American Heart Association, Million Hearts



INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Randy
Travis



Timeline
of a Stroke



Essential
Screenings



Heart
Health

Heart Healthy Quiz

Answer these six True/False questions.
Then check your answers.

- 1 The leading cause of stroke is high blood pressure.
☐ True ☐ False
- 2 FAST stands for Fast, Acting, Saves, Time.
☐ True ☐ False
- 3 Aspirin should be given for a suspected stroke.
☐ True ☐ False
- 4 Lack of physical activity is the biggest risk factor for heart disease.
☐ True ☐ False
- 5 Your heart stops beating when a heart attack occurs.
☐ True ☐ False
- 6 Eat only fat-free foods to protect your heart.
☐ True ☐ False

Answers:

- 1) True. A healthy blood pressure is 120/80.
- 2) False. It stands for Face, Arms, Speech, Time.
- 3) False. No medication should be given during a stroke except by a medical professional.
- 4) True. 40 percent of Americans are at risk for heart disease because they are inactive.
- 5) False. When your heart stops beating, it's called cardiac arrest.
- 6) False. Some fat in moderation is good for your heart and overall health.

Sources: Kettering Health, LifeShield, webMD

