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## I am woman: stroke affects me

**By media personality and National Stroke Foundation advocate Chris Bath**

I'll bet if you're asked to list terrible diseases attacking women, breast cancer would be in your top three. That's largely because breast cancer campaigners nailed the "I am woman hear me roar" thing. They raised hell until they made people and politicians care, increased funding, awareness, improved treatment and #BOOM survival rates worldwide improved. Hats off to them!

But would it surprise you to learn that stroke kills more women than breast cancer? Probably. There's bugger all funding to warn people about stroke in Australia.

So here are the facts. One in five women will have a stroke. Women have them at any age. If they survive, the disability stroke causes can be catastrophic. That's why this World Stroke Day on October 29, the theme is "I am Woman". Please bear with me while I roar.

Sadly it's the bits that make us women that make us a little more susceptible to stroke than men, those bits that wondrously create life but also drive us barmy (hello menstruation and menopause...) Women have strokes while they're pregnant, are more susceptible because of birth control pills and hormone replacement therapy and also because of irregular heartbeat. Sixty percent of people who will die from strokes are women.

Then there's the other side of stroke. Three in four people caring for stroke survivors - a partner, father, mother, daughter or son - are women. There is very little support or recognition for them. It's a relentless, full time job, one I've watched my mother tackle for the past six years since my Dad had a stroke in 2009.

So as a woman, how do you prevent a stroke? Well it's the usual healthy living messages: stop smoking, eat healthily, stay active, watch your weight, drink booze in moderation, reduce stress but also make sure you get your blood pressure checked regularly, especially if you're pregnant or taking the pill or HRT. Around four million Australians are living with high blood pressure and it's the number one cause of stroke. You can't feel it or see it, so you need to get it checked and it's a far more pleasant proposition than a pap smear or even a mammogram, no excuses ladies!!!

Stroke is a largely preventable disease but until Governments wake up and fund awareness, treatment and research programs, it will continue to wreak havoc across Australia. There's a stroke here every ten minutes. The criminal thing is most of them are preventable.

So how can you help?

Find out more about [stroke](#) and the [World Stroke Organization campaign](#) and share this [link](#) with the women you care about and even those you don't know and be part of the #iamwoman global campaign to save women around the world from death and disability.

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