Women have a unique stroke risk. Although stroke is now the 5th overall cause of death nationally, it is the 3rd leading cause of death in women. Also, while the rate of new strokes is declining in high income countries, the actual number of strokes is increasing nationwide because people are living longer. Stroke is more common in men until the age of 85 and more common in women after that. However, more than half of all strokes (54%) occur in women because women live longer, and the risk increases with age.

Additionally, each year more women than men die from stroke – in fact, 61% of all stroke deaths were in women. Women are also more likely to be living alone and widowed before stroke, which makes them less likely to arrive to the emergency department in time to receive the clot-busting medication to treat stroke. Women are more likely to live in a nursing home after stroke, they do not recover as well from stroke, and they are more likely to suffer from post-stroke depression.

All of these facts may be distressing, causing you to ask what you can do to help. Here are two suggestions: First, high blood pressure is the most important stroke risk factor you can control and it is more common in women. Encourage your mothers, your sisters, your daughters, your wives (and yourself!) to know their blood pressure and to go on medication if they have high blood pressure. For most patients, blood pressure should be less than 140/90. Second, an irregular heart rhythm called atrial fibrillation is another important stroke risk factor. If you are a female, you are at greater risk for stroke if you have atrial fibrillation. Encourage the women you know to be screened for atrial fibrillation if they are older than 75 years of age and to talk to their doctor about going on a blood thinner if they have atrial fibrillation. Last, teach both men and women in your life to recognize the symptoms of stroke and to call 911 if they occur. It can save lives and reduce disability if women can get critical stroke evaluation and treatment in time.

What are the signs of stroke?

Take Our Stroke Quiz
Ready to Join The National Ability Center-Splore Family?

**Discover the Possibilities**
The National Ability Center empowers individuals of all abilities by building self-esteem, confidence and lifetime skills through sport, recreation and educational programs.

If you’ve experienced a brain injury or stroke, you’re no stranger to uncertainty. Faced with recovery and new challenges in your daily life, you may wonder if your days of adventure are over. We’re here to tell you they haven’t. Thanks to The National Ability Center’s new partnership with Splore—a fellow outdoor activity organization—we have more opportunities than ever for you to explore Utah’s great outdoors. Regardless of age or ability, anybody is welcome on every kind of outing. As long as you get the ‘OK’ from your doctor, we’ll do all we need to get you ready for adventure.

**Adaptive Programs & Certified Instructors**
You’ll team up with our certified instructors and guides who are trained to modify equipment and teaching methods to make programs accessible and enjoyable. They can even personalize many activities to meet your physical or occupational therapy needs and goals. From archery and cycling to rock climbing and horseback riding, we offer over a dozen sports and recreation programs spanning all seasons. And now, as the warm weather settles in, we’re especially excited to share Splore’s whitewater rafting program.

Choose your journey down the Colorado or Green River surrounded by lush forest scenes and sun-soaked rock formations. We have trips through Class I—Class IV rapids, so there’s something for first-timers as well as whitewater veterans. Plus, we can customize trips to meet your personal needs.

While you’ll love the scenery, excitement, and expert assistance, what our members enjoy most is spending time with one another. One member, whose brother passed away from a stroke a few years back, still joins us on our rafting trips every year. “It’s very personal and important to him,” says Becky Van Horsen, the National Ability Center’s Splore Moab Program Manager. “He loves to come out and bond with other people who’ve shared similar experiences.” It’s this profound sense of community that has over 4,000 other members returning to The National Ability Center each year. We invite you and any of your family members, friends, or caregivers to join the action.

**Program Schedule & Reservations**