The new guidelines outline women's stroke risks and offer advice on treating them:

• **Women with a history of high blood pressure** before pregnancy should be considered for low-dose aspirin and/or calcium supplement therapy to lower pre-eclampsia risks.

• **Women who have pre-eclampsia** have twice the risk of stroke and a four-times the risk of high blood pressure later in life. Pre-eclampsia should be recognized as a risk factor after pregnancy as well, and other risk factors such as smoking, high cholesterol and obesity in these women should be treated early. Bushnell says women who have had pre-eclampsia should be proactive in alerting their doctors to that fact and start the conversation of stroke-risk assessment.

• **Women should be screened for high blood pressure before taking birth control pills because the combination raises stroke risks**.

• **Pregnant women with moderately high blood pressure (150-159 mmHg/100-109 mmHg**) may be considered for blood pressure medication. Expectant mothers with severe high blood pressure (160/110 mmHg or above) should be treated with medication during pregnancy.

• **Women who have migraine headaches with aura should stop smoking to avoid higher stroke risks.**

• **Women over age 75 should be screened for atrial fibrillation risks due to its link to higher stroke risk.**

**When it comes to preventing obesity**, **the guidelines suggest women follow a healthy lifestyle consisting of regular physical activity, moderate alcohol consumption (less than one drink a day for non-pregnant women), abstention from cigarette smoking and a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, grains, olive oil and low in saturated fat.**

About 30% of stroke patients have permanent disability after a stroke such as being unable to walk or speak, but many more have cognitive difficulties and other more subtle changes that keep them from doing what they did before, says Bushnell, an associate professor of neurology and director of the Stroke Center at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, N.C.