



## Healthy Worker Series Coming Soon

By Dr. Delia Roberts

Starting in 2020, BCFSC will be launching a series of resources to help encourage workers to maximize their health and longevity at work and at home. The series was inspired by questions from the Coast Harvest Advisory Group and BCFSC's Program Committee about the effects of aging on the forestry workforce and it soon became apparent that this information is important for all ages of workers, as well as their families. Developing good habits to maintain your health right at the start of your career will make a big difference in the long run. But even if you are well past your 30's, looking after your body will improve every aspect of your life at work and at home.

### Prevention and early detection are key

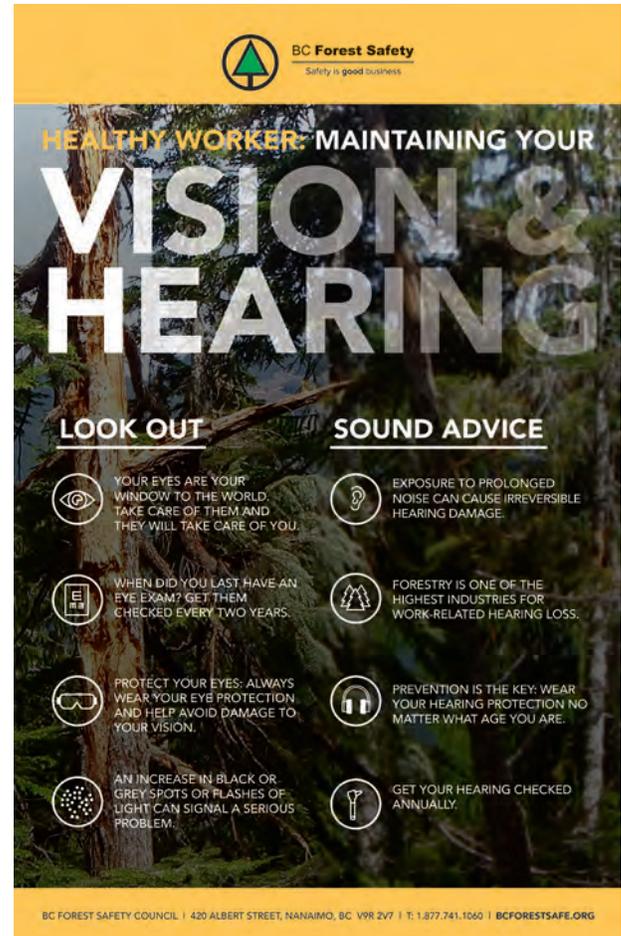
As a society we tend to focus on fixing what is broken. Certainly, the health care system is geared towards treating disease, with far less effort spent on prevention. As a forestry worker, you know that poorly maintained machinery results in costly repairs that far exceed the upfront investment in a regular maintenance program. It's easy to fall into the mindset of "it-won't-happen-to me", and when funds and time are short, we often find ourselves cutting corners. But sooner or later, this kind of approach results in a failure where the cost to your business and even your life can be catastrophic. A preventative approach is also critical to your health and the health of those that you love. The choices that we make set the stage for the behavior of those around us, and ignoring health throughout your lifespan is a sure way to develop disease. This new *Healthy Worker Series* will provide you with quality information in plain language and a practical format so that you can use these materials to choose and maintain a healthy life.

### Top ten topics

The following ten key areas were selected through a lens of improving workers' health. For each of these topics, a one-to-two page background piece will be provided with information on various health factors, a crew-talk sheet with suggestions for practical demonstrations and a poster to reinforce the importance of maintaining your health:



Vision and Hearing Crew Talk Sheet



Vision and Hearing Poster

1. Vision and Hearing
2. Balance and Agility
3. Musculoskeletal Injuries
4. Strength, endurance and coordination
5. Diet and Nutrition
6. Sleep and Fatigue
7. Blood Pressure and Cardiovascular Health
8. Diabetes
9. Cancer
10. Bone density

The first topic relating to Hearing and Vision has been completed and is available on our website.

[www.bcforestsafes.org/node/3435](http://www.bcforestsafes.org/node/3435)

Stay tuned for more on the upcoming Healthy Worker Series with topics on Balance and Agility and Musculoskeletal Injuries which will be available March 15, 2020. If you have any requests or experiences that you think are important to share, contact Dr. Delia Roberts at [FitSafe@gmail.com](mailto:FitSafe@gmail.com).

# Stroke – A Life Changer

By Dak Giles (Stroke Survivor)

*In support of increasing awareness related to health and wellness, we are sharing the following personal account from Dak Giles. Dak is one of BCFSC's external auditors who recently suffered a stroke and wanted to share his personal story to raise awareness of recognizing the signs and symptoms of a stroke and the road to recovery.*

There I was – sitting with my four grandkids and their grandma at the movie theatre watching Toy Story 4. As it inevitably happens, one of the grandkids had to go the bathroom, so I volunteered to escort him. As I got up from my seat, I happened to scratch my right ear and noticed that my ear felt “numb”. I thought “that’s weird” but I left it at that.

My grandson finished his business, so he and I walked back to our seats and sat back down to watch the movie. After sitting for a few minutes, I noticed that my right butt cheek felt like it was “asleep”. I chalked that experience up to uncomfortable movie seats and continued to watch the movie.

After the movie, I drove the kids home and then drove to my house. I went to bed and got up the next morning. It only took a moment to realize something was not right – the entire right side of my body was numb from head to toe! I contacted my son who drove me to Emergency. I told the caregiver my experience and said that I thought I had a stroke... as it turns out - I did!

I was told at the hospital that it was too late to intervene with IV tPA treatment. Generally there is a 4.5 hour window after stroke symptoms have started that IV tPA treatment can possibly reverse some of the effects of a stroke.

The important take-away is to know the signs /symptoms of a stroke and to get medical attention if you suspect that you are having a stroke. Common stroke signs/ symptoms are:

- Sudden weakness or numbness in the face, arm or leg on one side of the body.
- One side of face drooping.
- Abrupt loss of vision, strength, coordination, sensation, speech or the ability to understand speech. These symptoms may become worse over time.

- Sudden dimness of vision, especially in one eye.
- Sudden loss of balance, possibly accompanied by vomiting, nausea, fever, hiccups or trouble with swallowing.
- Sudden and severe headache with no other cause followed rapidly by loss of consciousness – indications of a stroke due to bleeding.
- Brief loss of consciousness.
- Unexplained dizziness or sudden falls.

Five months after the stroke, recovery seems slow. Most of the right side of my body is still numb but right arm/ hand motor skills are slowly improving. Handwriting and keyboarding with my right hand is still poor. I still can't play guitar – too “choppy” – bummer.

The biggest, potentially debilitating, complication post-stroke that I constantly think about is depression. Depression is a common experience for stroke survivors. It's often caused by biochemical changes in the brain. When the brain is injured, the survivor may not be able to feel positive emotions. Depression can also be a normal psychological reaction to the physical losses from a stroke.

Social support during the recovery stage is crucial. Depression goes hand-in-hand with lower levels of support. Look to your family, friends, a stroke support group or a combination of resources for help. Without support from my family and friends, major depression surely would have become a reality.

Recovery from a stroke will be quicker if you:

- Follow through with all prescribed physiotherapy.
- Take all medications at doses and intervals prescribed.



- Talk to your family and friends about your feelings – they care about you.
- Maintain a diet that focuses on:
  - Eating more:
    - Fruits
    - Vegetables
    - Whole-grain foods
    - Low-fat dairy foods
    - Fish, poultry, and nuts
  - Eating less:
    - Foods that are high in saturated fat, trans fats, cholesterol
    - Sodium, sweets, sugary drinks, and red meats

Stroke is a life changer – reduce the risk of having a stroke by learning more about strokes and by following proven stroke reduction regimes.

For more information on strokes and the recovery process, please visit: [www.heartandstroke.ca/stroke/signs-of-stroke](http://www.heartandstroke.ca/stroke/signs-of-stroke)