

High Blood Pressure and Stroke - Eddie Burnias

Eddie Burnias' fear of doctors may have been a contributing factor to his hemorrhagic stroke when he was 53.

Highlights:

01:14 Introduction

01:46 The first signs of hemorrhagic stroke

09:10 Insurance challenges

14:56 Family support

23:33 Family dynamics and healthcare decisions

28:39 High blood pressure and stroke prevention

33:35 High blood pressure and its risks

40:20 Stroke Prevention in California

47:18 Nutrition, food choices, and health

51:44 High blood pressure and stroke challenges

58:15 Stroke recovery with a survivor and expert insights

Transcript:

Bill Gasiamis 0:00

Hello, everyone, thank you once again for tuning in to the Recovery after Stroke podcast. Whenever I have created something like a podcast episode, or I do a live presentation, and most recently, when I wrote the book, I get overtaken for some time by a sense of trepidation about what I'm delivering and how it will be received.

Bill Gasiamis 0:23

So it's always a lovely thing to read a review, this time on Amazon, from someone who purchased a copy of my book, *The Unexpected Way The District Became The Best Thing That Happened*. The review was glowing, and it gave a five-star rating. The review titled *Read a Must-read for Stroke Survivors* and then continues with, *I wish I had this book while I was in the rehab hospital and not two years later.*

Bill Gasiamis 0:53

Bill is a great guy, which I agree with, check out his podcast. So thanks to everyone who has purchased the book already. And given the positive feedback. If you want to grab a copy, go to Amazon and type in my name, Bill Gasiamis In the search, or just go to recoveryafterstroke.com/book.

Introduction - Eddie Burnias

Bill Gasiamis 1:14

Now this is episode 294. And my guest today is Eddie Burnias, who has a fear of doctors so much so that he once opted to give himself six stitches when he injured his hand. And that fear of doctors ultimately contributed to Eddie experiencing a hemorrhagic stroke. Eddie Burnias, welcome to the podcast.

Eddie Burnias 1:39

Thank you. I appreciate it. Glad to be here.

Bill Gasiamis 1:42

Great to meet you, man. Tell me a little bit about what happened to

The first signs of hemorrhagic stroke

Eddie Burnias 1:46

So on Thanksgiving. I had my stroke at 23. So Thanksgiving being my favorite holiday, it sucked. It came on unexpectedly. I never even had any headaches or any clue that it was gonna come. My type of stroke was called a hemorrhagic. I hope I pronounced that correctly.

Bill Gasiamis 2:21

Was it a bleed in the brain?

Eddie Burnias 2:23

Yeah, it was in the back of my brain from where I'm told. So what happened is just at night, like it was a normal night, I had no symptoms coming up to it other than my high blood pressure. I got up to go to the restroom and the moment I slipped out of bed, I fell, hit my head, and got back up, thinking I just stepped wrong or I stepped on my side and they laid back down to go back to sleep.

Eddie Burnias 2:57

About an hour and a half later, I got up again this time no one's home, my girlfriend, everybody was gone. And I get up again and again I fall. I think something's wrong. You know, this is not normal. I try to get myself up. But now my whole right side is not working. It's numb, I could feel it. But I can't control it. My arm and my leg just weren't doing what I wanted him to do.

Eddie Burnias 3:29

So I physically just got myself up with my left side and washed my face. And then I heard my stepson come in, in the house at the time. And I called him over to help me call 911 because I couldn't even dial 911. I think everything was happening so fast. My left side worked fine. But I couldn't comprehend how to use the phone properly. To put it in my left hand. It was weird. Anyhow, I got taken by the medics team. They took me to a hospital. Stayed there for five days. And I've been recovering ever since.

Bill Gasiamis 4:17

I was gonna say so you're you had the phone near you. Are you able to tell the phone to make a phone call for you? Or?

Eddie Burnias 4:25

Yeah, the funny thing is, yeah, I brought I do have it and I have. The funny thing is that I have, you know, speed dial on the phone. So I called my mother and I told her, Hey, Mom, something's wrong. I think I'm having a stroke. And she freaks out and hangs up on me. So now I'm like, I don't know what to do.

Eddie Burnias 4:49

And that's when I heard Michael come through the door. And I called over for him and we called 911. And that was taken care of but yeah, it was kind of it was kind of Have I like I've never experienced it. But I gotta say that this has been a life-changing experience. I mean, he's changed everything.

Bill Gasiamis 5:12

Yeah, Eddie, that's weird that you would call your mother instead of 911. And then she hung up on you the worst.

Eddie Burnias 5:22

Yes, you're here, because you're panicked. Let me backtrack because I'm a pretty physical guy. And I don't like to I don't like doctors. I don't. I've given myself ditches. That's how I wish I wanted to stay away from the hospital. But my

mother, my mother knows that. Yeah. My mother knows that.

Eddie Burnias 5:45

So she panics when and when and when, you know, I'm calling her out. She's like, What the hell is going on? So, you know, luckily, she got a hold of them while Michael laughed and they communicated and they worked out the details. But yeah, my mom was hung up on me at first.

Bill Gasiamis 6:03

I can't move forward until you tell me why you what happened. And how does somebody give themselves stitches?

Eddie Burnias 6:11

Well, because I seem, to I grown up with my my stepfather. He was, he had lung cancer. And every time we went to the doctor, it was always bad news. So I grew up thinking that you know, the hospital was something that you go to whenever you something's bad gonna happen. So I had it in the back of my mind. So one day, I didn't even know we were outside playing or something. And I slipped and I gasped my hand.

Eddie Burnias 6:45

I don't know if you can see it, but it gassed down. Middle East, right, right, my middle finger. I had to give myself six stitches. So and then on top of it. This is my I'm right-handed by given with my left hand, which wasn't that good to experience. But actually, you don't see a scar too bad. So I think I did pretty well.

Bill Gasiamis 7:08

Relations when you found your calling, that's crazy. So yeah, I understand the whole I'm afraid of hospitals thing because yeah, that growing up and seeing, you know, somebody being unwell when they're at the hospital can leave an impression, of course. But what you didn't realize is he was going there for help. You thought he was going there to be unwell.

Eddie Burnias 7:39

Yeah, exactly. I know, like I attributed to every time we went to the hospital, it was like it was it was a journey for something bad. It was and there was never anything ever good. And we never went there and got good news. It was always worse or it just wasn't a good experience for me as a kid. So like, I never, you know, even to this day, I stopped. I mean, I stopped going to the hospital.

Eddie Burnias 8:06

And I think that's what led to my experience with my stroke is you know, my first off, I gotta say, it's, you know, it's a pleasure meeting gave you given us an outlet to do this. And to get out to the people to, you know, that are having similar situations. But mine, my situation, I think was preventable. Because I had high blood pressure.

Eddie Burnias 8:36

And I didn't, you know, I wasn't educated enough to realize that it's really important for you to take your medicine and to keep your blood pressure down. Because I was I thought myself as Superman. I'm young. I was, you know, I've hurt myself, but I got it, I heal. But this thing was just I wasn't, it wasn't anything like I mean, I've experienced. It's changed my life completely. I've been told I'm a nicer person, because you believe that I thought was a nice guy. That's all.

Insurance challenges for Eddie Burnias

Bill Gasiamis 9:15

That's crazy. So your stepson finally comes to find you call 911. You end up in hospital for five days, a place you don't want to be there till you've had a bleed on the brain. What? So how do they go about resolving that for you or helping you with that? What do they do? What's the if you've

Intro 9:37

had a stroke, and you're in recovery, you'll know what a scary and confusing time it can be. You're likely to have a lot of questions going through your mind. How long will it take to recover? Will I recover? What things should I avoid in case I make matters worse, doctors will explain things that you've never had a stroke before.

Intro 9:58

You probably don't know what question to ask, if this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery. If you're finding yourself in that situation, stop worrying, and head to recoveryafterstroke.com, where you can download a guide that will help you. It's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke.

Intro 10:20

These seven questions are the ones Bill wished he'd asked when he was recovering from a stroke, they'll not only help you better understand your condition, they'll help you take a more active role in your recovery. Head to the website. Now, recoveryafterstroke.com and download the guide. It's free.

Eddie Burnias 10:40

Here's the crazy part. We're here I'm in California, just to let you know, background but honestly, it's I didn't get much. I mean, they came to my experience there they wouldn't let me sleep. Obviously. I just was tired. For the first three days, I was exhausted. I just wanted to sleep. But they wouldn't let me sleep they woke me up every hour. I got to get up and walk after the second day, I'd have to get up and try to walk.

Eddie Burnias 11:15

So about the third day, I'm walking with the limp, but I'm not but I am walking using one of their rollers. You know, but I am I can move. My thoughts are there. And even you know, even to this day I do get sidetracked quite easily after my speech is there. But sometimes I forget the words. Like I had no what I was saying, or what I was gonna say, but I just couldn't think of the word. It's kind of frustrating.

Eddie Burnias 11:50

But then I come back, they come and tell me that I had a minor stroke, if there's such a thing, because if you haven't had a stroke, there's no fucking thing no excuse my French, but there's no such thing as a minor stroke. It was scary as hell. So, I mean, it's just, it's changed everything in my mind. I can talk now I can I can move again, which is great. And I feel sorry for others who have gotten even more shares than myself.

Eddie Burnias 12:23

But that's why I'm here because I wanted to get my story out and I wanted to let people know this, this, this can be prevented, especially if you if you're in a situation like mine, where you know, you don't like the hospital, you don't like going to doctors, you got you you take your medicine when you're having a headache and then goes away and he stopped taking medicine.

Eddie Burnias 12:44

Well, you know, when it comes to blood pressure, I you have to you have to

continue to be stringent about it and make it a habit. Make it a part of your life. Because otherwise you're gonna end up in situations like mine in the making even worse. And it's I wouldn't wish this upon anybody. But, you know, it's it is a life-changing moment. But it also affects everybody around you, not just yourself.

Bill Gasiamis 13:12

You know, so, yeah. So you're, you're getting back on your feet. Your speech has come back. And your thoughts are okay. And then they send you home, day five or day six.

Eddie Burnias 13:29

Yeah, to day five, they sent me home. , I'm on my own to the Allegheny pamphlets to read. But it's like, you know, I had to read it myself. The doctors were telling me they wanted me to go to therapy and stuff. But let me sidetrack, also, my insurance at the time. My insurance was I was weak. I'm going through a worker's comp competency situation on top of everything.

Eddie Burnias 14:01

And I've been off since April of 20. Last year, on November 1, my insurance got canceled. So when my stroke happened I didn't have any insurance so it was it was here in California. That is not a good thing. So basically, I'm getting pushed out the door as quickly as I can without any medical backing.

Eddie Burnias 14:30

I'll get good now I got everything squared away now but it took me a good two months after the stroke to get you know my insurance in hand and all this and that but it was tough, you know without any without. If I couldn't speak my job would have been worse. I honestly don't know where I would be right now because you don't get much help without you having medical insurance here.

Family support while dealing with high blood pressure and stroke

Bill Gasiamis 14:56

Yeah, so you were you went home alone. As in, you went home because your partner doesn't live with you. Is that Oh, no, no, no,

Eddie Burnias 15:07

I take it back. I'm sorry, I went home with my family. So you know, not only that but what I mean, what I mean by alone is I didn't have any doctor. The primary care.

Bill Gasiamis 15:18

Support, you just went home. Yeah.

Eddie Burnias 15:21

So I was, you know, trying to try to educate myself. And that's how I came upon you, I went to the, I went to Barnes and Noble and tried to get books there, I went to the library and tried to get books to, you know, read up on my case in strokes, and when, because I have not experienced it, and none of my family has had one.

Eddie Burnias 15:42

But I came across a new one day on my website. And, you know, I, you know, I'm a hard listener now. So I've been listening to all your podcasts. And, you know, it's, it's, how should I say what you're doing is a godsend, because you give people that that don't know, like myself an avenue where we wouldn't have won. If I get emotional.

Bill Gasiamis 16:16

I'm glad it's helpful. And, look, when I went through it in 2012, I went home the same as you. The only difference was my insurance, all that kind of stuff was fine, as far as that was concerned. But we went home, with no idea, no clue what to do. What? How do you how do you be somebody who's got bleeding in the brain? How do you like to interact with the world, it was a mess, right?

Bill Gasiamis 16:43

And in 2012, there was nothing on the internet, I couldn't find any help you could find a book in the bookstore, but you couldn't do anything. There was a lot of stuff about peripheral things you can do to support your weight, to lose weight to improve your fitness, you know, there was a lot of stuff around all the things that we needed, there was a lot of stuff that around all the things we needed.

Bill Gasiamis 17:10

But they weren't sold as being specifically for people with brain injuries or with stroke, injuries, or any of that stuff. So I had to go on that journey myself as well, and learn and research and research and research and be my advocate, and try and find other people that were like me, it was impossible. So I thought stuff. I

thought to myself, I'll start a podcast and I'm sure I'll find people to come on, I'll learn from them, they'll learn from me.

Bill Gasiamis 17:38

But I didn't realize how, necessary it was I thought I was just solving a problem for me, I didn't realize I was solving a problem for a whole bunch of other people. And I'm glad I am. I found my purpose through this work. Like I appreciate the fact that it exists. And that I get to do it. And it led to the book that I wrote, you know, it led to me putting together all that new information that I had about how can I heal from a stroke. How can I overcome that?

Bill Gasiamis 18:10

It led to me going well, other people need to know about what I've learned and what helped me I don't know how I'm going to reach them. The podcast is a good way to sort of start and talk about the topics that I want to talk about with people but you can't in a podcast you can put it all in one place like in a neat little package and give all that information to people but you can't put it in the book. So yeah, that's how it is.

Eddie Burnias 18:42

Order I just ordered your book. So I bet exactly what I got I have it on Audible but I ordered a hard copy. Also though so the hard copies come in the mail but I already started to divert your read half of it. There's a lot of useful information in there I mean really, like first off I didn't even know what type of stroke I had.

Eddie Burnias 19:05

Without your seven questions, I wouldn't have known that like there's those are very helpful because when you're going through and just say I'm so new to it that I'm very in my third month of recovery so I'm a baby when it comes to this stuff I'm you know I'm soaking up knowledge here and here and there. And like you said 2012 2024 is not much there's not much information on stroking out there.

Eddie Burnias 19:32

There's probably more than there was in 2012 but there's not much there isn't there you know like you said it's called a comparison guys compared to what you were you went to there is more but it doesn't get to how you should treat this up, what you should eat, what steps you should take To whom you should talk to how to involve everyone around you.

Eddie Burnias 20:05

Because that's everybody's, it's a multi everybody in your family. You know what I mean? So one thing is, it got us closer to my family, which is a blessing. You know. So the only bad thing for me that I can say is that in the experience itself, I'm still my right side of my body is still not fully cooperating.

Eddie Burnias 20:33

But it's, I mean, I'm farther along than I was two months ago, I walk, you know, three to five miles a day now. We're the first month I was, I mean, the first week, I was barely able to stand up. You know? I do.

Bill Gasiamis 20:49

So with the family with the family, you guys. But so you're a nicer guy, you things with the relationships are better. Did that just happen? Or did you go after making those things better? What are you thinking in the background? Like, me, when I was doing that, I was thinking, I might not be here in six months, I better make everything good. How do you get to it?

Eddie Burnias 21:17

Well, mine, a CMO I am I'm gonna quit. You know, I'm stubborn. I'm a first-generation Mexican, American. And we're not men don't cry. Men don't. Are we don't show affection, we provide. And that's, that's how that's how we show we love each other. But this has changed it. So you know, it's gotten me more open.

Eddie Burnias 21:48

I talk more. Before I had an issue, I would, I would keep it in and commitment came to the Gaussian day know the word, but I can't think of it right now. From pop. Exactly, exactly. Thank you, you remember, Nostradamus, but anyhow, we, we do that? You know, and it's, it's not good. Because it eventually eats that, you know, and it's, it's and people you shouldn't only do are your family not you know, I'm all for therapy and therapists and, and help.

Eddie Burnias 22:25

But if you're dealing with something, I think your family, especially the ones you love the most should be part of it, you know? And where I'm from, it's not like that. It's like you You don't need to, you know, why do I need to tell you my problems, because you're not going to be able to solve them I have to solve them. That's the attitude that we know I come from. And it's not that it's not a good

attitude, it's not a good attitude to have.

Eddie Burnias 22:52

You know, vocalizing it vocalizing what I'm going through with my family is it's open doors. You know, it's gotten me, I've met people that I probably wouldn't have ever met had not had the stroke. I've had I've gotten boost intel that I would never, ever, ever have had to ask and help me. Because I was not the kind of person to ask for help. I do everything myself. But, you know, what showed me like, Who's, who's there for you? You know, and it's important to take and give back.

Family dynamics and healthcare decisions

Bill Gasiamis 23:33

Yeah, that's important, what you just said, to give back. And that's, that was what happened to me, I feel, I don't feel obliged to give back. But I feel like I must give back. Because, like you people came out of nowhere. They did a whole bunch of things that I never expected them to do. People I never knew. And then it's like, and on a second, I'm not sure I would have helped you if you were in a bad way. I don't know if I would have done that.

Bill Gasiamis 24:03

Do you know, I really don't know, if I would have stepped up, therefore would have been that kind of guy. So I appreciate it. And now I think I want to step up and be that kind of guy. I want to make sure that when people need help no matter who they are, if I can offer something, I don't care what it is going to offer it instead of walking away and letting somebody else take the responsibility to take that job.

Bill Gasiamis 24:27

I'm happy to go and do what I can for people. It's far better. I completely agree with you. What's interesting about you is you see it from a Mexican background, right? However, I know that the Mexican family is the most important thing. And yet you're in a family you're in a Mexican family.

Bill Gasiamis 24:48

You guys are all close in a way by your communication is keeping you makes you was it making you kind of like a little more distant even though you're close. to

your family and your family's importance, it seems like the lack of communication that you were doing was sort of keeping you a little bit outside where you wanted it to be.

Eddie Burnias 25:10

Yeah, well, it's like I said, we're close. But we're close in in. We don't talk, we don't talk about our problems. That's just something we just don't do. Because you're, you're we know you're a man, your oil, the way your raises you, everybody has problems, why put your problems on anybody else? You are a man who solves your problems. But sometimes you need that extra help, you need help to solve your problems.

Eddie Burnias 25:41

Everybody does, you know. And that's, that's the thing. So that's what this has done. It's, it's been more vocal. It's lately it's, my wife says, now that I talked too much. So that, you know, she's all in before you never do these. Tell me what you asked me. I mean, I can't help but now. It's like, I tell her everything. How I feel I'm feeling if I, if I you know, before, if I had a headache, or I wouldn't feel well, I would, I would keep him to myself.

Eddie Burnias 26:14

And pretty much it'd be grumpy. You know, I think it would if it wasn't I would take out the grub my illness or whatever up on my family that is that close to you. And now it's different. It's, you know, we talked, he has one skit about his uncle and his aunt, were you saying that? That guy that his uncle is sick, and his wife keeps telling them, You need to go to the doctor, and you need to get you know, get a colon check.

Eddie Burnias 26:47

And he goes, that's not something that we need to do. I mean, I have nothing, nobody touched me there. And so she finally convinces him to go. And he ends up having into finding a tumor. And so now, he gets all he goes back, they go back home, and he's all the See yesterday, I was all fine.

Eddie Burnias 27:06

Today, you made me go to the doctor and I got cancer. You still, it's like, that's how we are? We're, we're not, we're not we're not pro-pro hospitals or pro, like their fists or anything like that. Proactive. Yeah, or proactive. It's just like, we

were more reactive, we wait and or we're waiting for the bad news to come. You know, we're waiting for that, instead of being proactive, and then just concentrating on the good, because there's a there's a lot more good than bad.

Bill Gasiamis 27:46

And then if you know that something is there, you can actually take action and resolve it, maybe you can treat it, maybe you can prevent it from happening. You know, that's the whole thing about knowing about your blood pressure needs, since I know about it, and I have medication, I can prevent a stroke from happening.

Bill Gasiamis 28:06

If I pretend that it's not happening to me and that I don't have a problem with my blood pressure, then I'm looking at the cliff, I could fall over the cliff any moment because I'm not paying attention to the sign that says don't step over there. You were doing that, that you felt like it's not such a big deal, you made a medical decision about what it means to have high blood pressure that you shouldn't have made. The decision was, well, this is not a big deal. I don't need to take my medication. Yeah, it's very common, though. Very common.

High blood pressure and stroke prevention

Eddie Burnias 28:46

Yeah, that's what it is. A lack of education is a lack of education. Because like I said, my, my, I think my stroke could have been preventable, because I had medication, I had everything at my hand at everything I needed to take care of myself, the help, I had the doctors, I had everything I needed, but I chose to be a knucklehead and not follow directions as I should have. I will take my medication when I start feeling down or start having a headache here.

Eddie Burnias 29:20

I would take my blood pressure medication and then they would go away and then I'd stop. And it just got to the point where I wasn't taking I wasn't checking my blood pressure either like regularly to see how high I was or how low I was. Now it's like I take my blood sugar every day every morning just to make sure I'm taking my medication and my blood pressure is down to normal like it shouldn't

be.

Eddie Burnias 29:48

But I wouldn't have known that and how important it is to, you know, monitor something like this. If I hadn't had this job Um, the same thing with with my friends. You know, I got buddies that are same way, same age, close to the same age that are just as knuckleheaded as I am, who think they're Superman, you know, who just think, you know, I've hurt myself, I'll heal. But there are some things that you just can't heal.

Eddie Burnias 30:21

There's something that you can't control that is beyond your means that is beyond your younger self, that you need someone with medical expertise to help, you know. And when free and the blood pressure thing that's, that should be taught in school. Oh, man, that really should because it's when they say it's the silent killer. It is.

Eddie Burnias 30:43

Because I had no, I didn't have any idea. Or even any, any, like, I should say, any symptoms leading up to my stroke. That night when I went to bed, I was normal. I was like talking to you just like I am now. And then I went to bed and all of a sudden, I couldn't use my right hand. And I can't use my right side. It's that that's how silent is because it got you like that.

Bill Gasiamis 31:19

When they gave you medication, and they realized that you had high blood pressure, do you know how high it was? To know when the?

Eddie Burnias 31:27

Yeah, my I was one? I was averaging 185. Over 130. So it was high. Yeah, it was high-end up creating crazy parties. Yes, last just last night. I'm over here at my buddy's house. And we're talking about this because I'm trying to preach to everybody now. One of my buddy's brothers comes in and we check our time I bring my blood pressure checker with me all the time. Now I have one in the car.

Eddie Burnias 31:55

And we sit down and I have it here with me and the ugly man started shitting giggles and is trying to check your blood pressure. His blood pressure was 195 or 140. Like, oh my God, that's normal. He says all that's normal for him on that, you

know, you need to go to the doctor you need to deal. You don't understand you. You're skating on thin ice here. Eventually, its dice is gonna crack trust me, you're gonna, you know, something like that.

Eddie Burnias 32:28

And that's how knucklehead I was like, these are my friends. And they're just as bad. You know, when it's because of lack of education. You know, it's, it's a hassle. It's a hassle also to have to miss work or miss something just to go to the doctor and wait two hours, you know, to get it to be seen and to be treated. But, you know, if you look back, I'd rather do that than have them on the other side of the coin, where you're getting hurt or you have to be in the hospital and then there's nothing you can do.

Eddie Burnias 33:06

I could have gone the other way my stroke like this a minor but it could have been a lot worse. I couldn't get it where I can't speak because I've seen that, you know now, I've seen other people that have gotten more that when they can't walk or even when they talk they're there their speeches change. Half of their faces are numb a lot.

High blood pressure and its risks

Bill Gasiamis 33:35

Did your friend go to get it checked out afterward?

Eddie Burnias 33:39

The way that the way we got him to go. We told his wife, we had a goal. We had a goal above his head to go to the boss. Yeah, because otherwise, you know, he would have been he would have been deciding, you know, if I'm good. I don't have a headache. I'm not I feel good. That's exactly how I felt. You know,

Bill Gasiamis 34:03

many years ago, I was volunteering for the Stroke Foundation here in Australia. And they used to do a program where they would go into one of the big shopping malls. And they would set up a blood pressure check stand. And we would encourage people to come over, put their hand in the machine, check their blood pressure, and go away, you know, for free. It was no big deal.

Bill Gasiamis 34:30

People come over and then there's guys come over and the blood pressure is 190 over 130 Yeah. And it's like how do you feel man? Not feel good. Okay, so what we've found is that your blood pressure is 190 over 130. And what we suggest is that right now, the first thing you do is you leave and you go to the hospital and they're looking at you like a weird because dude is trying to buy some stuff, you know, with, with a family or have come to dinner or whatever, and I'm going home.

Bill Gasiamis 35:09

And that is double what it should be. And you should go directly to a hospital and get that checked out because you're at risk of stroke. And the guy's got no clue that he's at risk of stroke and doesn't feel like he is at risk of stroke and probably never met anybody who had a stroke because of high blood pressure. And convincing him to do that is difficult. But hopefully, and then we can't make them go to the hospital, we can't call the doctor or anything.

Bill Gasiamis 35:42

But we can encourage them. So we give the guy a massive shock, just walking past and getting a high blood pressure rating and then being told that he's at risk of stroke. So it's hard to comprehend that, that if I feel okay, if everything seems normal, if everything is, is my everyday life, like if anything is just the same as it always has been, it feels very difficult to try and make that person bridge the gap from actually I'm not okay I need to take action. This is potentially very serious or life-threatening.

Eddie Burnias 36:25

Yeah, that's the thing about blood pressure. It's hard to comprehend the fact that because it doesn't give you any symptoms, you're not okay. You're you know, you're not, you're you're you're you're you're right, you're riding around with an expiration date on your hand. And I mean, we all are, in the long run, but we're talking about this is going to shorten your expiration date. It's like bad milk.

Eddie Burnias 36:49

Yeah, believe me, your milk in there for too long that milk is going to start to stink. You know, that's what's happening. You're not taking into consideration the fact that internally, you're not doing good. You might be all good on and 30 on the outside. But internally, it's, you know, it's a hot mess. And that's what that's

where I was, I was, you know, I was a hot mess. I'm 54 years old. So I started before it, you know, I'm a little overweight. Now. I'm working on that now.

Eddie Burnias 37:22

But, you know, I just I barely started gaining weight the past 10 years, I was normally around 171 80 I jumped up to 190 Mamba to 10 now. But it's a you know, I come from, I'm an athlete, I grew up playing basketball and football and baseball my whole life. So I've always been active. But the older you get, the less active you become, it's just natural, and there's nothing you can do about it. You can't run as fast as you can, and you can't jump like before.

Eddie Burnias 37:59

So it's gotten to the point where now I just getting out and walking, you know it. I preach this to everyone. I mean, being sedentary is the worst thing you can do to yourself, to your psyche to those around you if you care, you know do for them. Because they're depending on you know. So I mean, first it's selfish not to start thinking about others like that, especially you if you love them, because

Bill Gasiamis 38:34

you're depending on them, but they're depending on you, but they want you around, and they don't want to lose you early and for no reason. For somebody that's preventable.

Bill Gasiamis 38:44

They don't want to lose you, you know, I'm, I'm 50 this year, and my, in the last 10 years, I met that I'm at that stage where everybody who I grew up with when we were doing all the wrong things smoking drinking, all the people who continued to smoke and drink into their 40s and, and live an unhealthy life are all suffering now are all suffering heart attacks, of loss to friends in their 40s from heart attacks, or three, actually, three.

Bill Gasiamis 39:20

And more people are coming on board now that are having heart attacks. Who knew of other people in their circle the same age as us who had a heart attack 12 months ago and didn't see that as a sign to do something about it? They were overweight, they weren't eating well, they weren't healthy, but it still wasn't a sign to do something about it.

Bill Gasiamis 39:43

Yes. So strange, you know, to say to notice people I used to and now I see people that are like me who's had a serious health condition and I compare myself and I say okay, there they came similar back right around two May they work a similar job to me. They have similar habits to me. They're a similar age to me, and they've had this health condition that could be made.

Bill Gasiamis 40:11

I need to make sure that I'm doing the right things to avoid that I need to take what happened to them as a lesson and take action. Or do that now, but I didn't do it earlier. Earlier when we were getting sick. I was like, what is gonna happen to me? It's gonna Yeah, fortunately, happened to them.

Stroke prevention in California

Eddie Burnias 40:32

Yeah, exactly. When you have that Superman mentality where, you know, it's like, yeah, they probably don't eat correctly, or they, I don't know, there's always something that genetic on their side or something. You could always make excuses. There's always something but you always do you know, it's a it is going to happen.

Eddie Burnias 40:51

In May, you're just, you know, you're you're buying time, is what it is. No one's known Superman, no one's untouchable. If it escaped, it's gonna get you get your time, it's your time. But if you can prevent, you know, you have to go to the doctor and incurring all these fees and bills and extra bills and stuff. You know, I, you got to me, you got to unselfish notch.

Bill Gasiamis 41:20

That's the best way to go about it. Prevention is the best way. So yeah, you're off work. Is that situation going to be resolved soon? Do? Do you know, when that's going to?

Eddie Burnias 41:34

Yeah, I have a hearing for that. Next month on the fourth. See, this is all happening. So it's like, I'm in the inception of everything. So you know, I'm, it's great. But what I was gonna say is that it's been a blessing for me that having a stroke has helped me. It's allowed me to get closer to a family member, one of the

most important, but it's also allowed me to know I'm starting a support group.

Eddie Burnias 42:06

So I have I have, like two other friends that that they and I get together. That's why I was at my friend's house last night. And we get together and we, you know, well, now we're talking about each other's physical ailments and whatnot. Where before we would, we wouldn't talk, we talked and watched a game or, drank or played poker or something. Now we're getting no because it's happening.

Eddie Burnias 42:31

I want my other buddy, he just, had, like you said, a heart attack. His was is, was a heart attack, I probably would, he would have told me what is similar to a heart attack. And they kept him in there for observation for two days. But yet again, he's 15 years old, he and I grew up together, drinking, smoking, and doing what normal kids do.

Eddie Burnias 42:57

But there comes a time when you got to you got to stay and buckle down and not look at your physical ailments and take care of yourself. Take care of yourself for the future. We're still here, especially here in California, where the cost of living is exorbitant. We work on it, we're constantly worrying about money, you know, money that we have to have, you know, all the money in the world is not going to prevent you from having a stroke.

Eddie Burnias 43:26

And all the money in the world is not going to make you happy. Because I've gone I've been to that point, I begged I, you know, I made a million dollars a year, you know, for consecutive years. And I'm not bragging because that's not what this is about. But it doesn't make me any happier. You know, it's not that money doesn't solve everything. Money can help. But it's not the end all be all. You know, because most

Bill Gasiamis 43:54

we're wearing California are you in where our Bay Area? Okay, area. So in the Bay Area, you've started this particular support group. Are you Yeah, how are you finding people? What kind of people are you looking to find? There'll be people listening here who are from the Bay Area, they might want to reach out.

Eddie Burnias 44:15

Yeah, so far, it's like I said, it's just, it's just a couple of buddies and me who started meeting on Thursday night. And just just kind of to get them we're starting to get the word out. We're starting to make some pamphlets and get out my number I believe we have attached my numbers, you know, it's available. And if anybody wants to talk or maybe you know, have questions, I'll do my best to answer them.

Eddie Burnias 44:46

I'm not by any means a licensed physician or even an educated physician for that matter, but I do have a lot of experience between, you know, the people that I think experiences is the most. And the best education you can get. You know, somebody who's done there has been there, done that, I would rather go, you know, and listen to them than somebody who's learned from a book, you know not to get don't get around that you don't book learning is great.

Eddie Burnias 45:21

But if somebody's had the experience hands-on first-time experience, I'd rather learn that. And that's all it does. But like I said, when I had my stroke, I couldn't find any information. It is so hard to find information regarding, you know, how to treat yourself or what you should eat.

Eddie Burnias 45:43

And then the doctors the word, my situation, I didn't have the backing because I didn't have any insurance at the time, then I didn't know what I should do, or shouldn't do, what I should eat, or what I shouldn't eat. And that's like your bookings you know, delves into that.

Eddie Burnias 46:03

And it, which is great. But I didn't have that, you know, I'm barely getting it now. And I'm here to help people that, you know, before we even get to the point we gave you haven't shown, let's start with what you shouldn't be eating, and we shouldn't be. Because here in California, I mean, you're from Australia, but here, you turn on the TV.

Eddie Burnias 46:26

Every commercial is fast. I mean, every commercial, it's anything I've watched, I've watched television in Europe, and even UK and there's no fast food, then they don't even show fast food. Here every commercial is faster. You're you're getting

a no. And during the United States, the food that they were being, you know, served is not good. It's it would be it would be illegal in other parts of the world.

Eddie Burnias 46:59

But yet, we're consuming this. And that, to me it is my mother, because that goes with everything that goes with, you know, that attributes high blood pressure, attributes to weight gain, attributes due to heart disease and cardiovascular disease.

Nutrition, food choices, and health

Bill Gasiamis 47:18

There's a great book called Why We Get Sick. Okay, so for anyone listening. And it's probably the best book for somebody who's had a stroke to read about nutrition specifically. And when I read it, it was just solving. It was just explaining so many things. It's by a gentleman called Benjamin Beekman Benjamin. And it's available on Amazon and all those places, and probably you can get it from bookstores.

Bill Gasiamis 47:56

And it's not a hard read, it's a very easy read. It's not a very thick book. But it just goes into so much detail about how one thing leads to another leads to another leads to another. It talks about how you get to experience high blood pressure how people get to become diabetic or how they get to have a heart attack.

Bill Gasiamis 48:23

And it's all related to food. And one specific thing that he talks about is sugar, the amount of sugar that we consume, and why it's important to decrease the amount of sugar as much as possible, how much of it we eat, and then how often we eat it. So Why We Get Sick is probably my first favorite nutrition book health book. And it's really important to very it's a

Eddie Burnias 48:59

I know, in your book, you mentioned like your pasta after you had your Shoku you know, the pasta wasn't good for you, in itself in the era of food coma. Yeah. You know, and I feel you on that. Because my thing is not possible. Where I breathe, you know, we get the greasy meat, the tortillas, and all that.

Eddie Burnias 49:26

It's and it's you know, I as soon as I got out as soon as I was able to eat on my own, I wouldn't got you know, the biggest burrito I can get. And man after I was I was out for two days, you know, and you you still feel healthy. You know, it's it's weird because you didn't think I never thought about that before. You know, I would I would I would, you know, late nights. You know when I was younger, I'd go out late at night to kind of buy a taco truck.

Eddie Burnias 49:56

I don't know if you are familiar with that out here but do I Find a taco truck and we'd be down tacos? You know? And that's just leading to what you're just saying. It's a domino effect. And you know, I'm playing Domino's with my life and I don't want to do that, you know, but you don't know any better.

Bill Gasiamis 50:14

I spent some time in LA, in 2000. And okay. And men's house. I was in heaven in a way, because it's not food that we can get. We can't get Mexican food a lot in Australia. Although now there's a Mexican taco place everywhere. It's really popular. But I mean, we've seen a really big boom, but back in 2013, we hadn't seen it.

Bill Gasiamis 50:39

You just buy the cheap Mexican type of food from the supermarket you bring it home and it doesn't seem thing. But But I know what you mean about the taco stands the everywhere little shops, little windows in walls.

Eddie Burnias 50:56

So it's like, you were where I'm from, we can get it anytime, any time of the day, any time of the night. You want to get a taco. But it's a greasy taco, which you know, is that and then there's different types of taco but it's, it's that well, we shouldn't be doing it. And I think in school, this shouldn't be happening with the kids is teaching them young. You know, Hey, man, you stay away from, you know, it's okay.

Eddie Burnias 51:21

It's okay to eat in moderation. But don't overindulge. Don't, don't go in to have, you know, have one soda, if you're gonna have a soda, don't go have a six-pack. When you get older, you know, don't go have 612 12 beers, and then go out and

have tacos and greasy burgers at three o'clock in the morning regularly. Because that's not nutritionists. That's not good.

High blood pressure and stroke challenges

Bill Gasiamis 51:48

Do you have children?

Eddie Burnias 51:50

Yes, I do. Yes. How old are they there they're grown, my boys are grown. My, my oldest son is 32. My youngest is 27. So there I have three of them. And my other ones in 1,000,029. But they're, you know, I'm on them now. I wasn't before you know, because they're big, strong kids or you're like I Oh, you know, I was when they were I was very you know, they're all you're benching 340 pounds. You know, and to me that's how I grew up.

Eddie Burnias 52:25

I thought that was that's how you're strong. You're strong you're strong guy. But doesn't matter how much cool you can live man. If you're not taking care of your inner inner body and your inner soul. It's not You're not strong you're not there's no strong, there's no amount of weight that's going to give you is going to help you when it comes to subconscious.

Bill Gasiamis 52:46

Strengthen muscles comes with many, you know helps you with some things but there's very you have to strengthen your character you have to have strength in your Exactly. In your emotional state, you have to have all sorts of different strengths.

Bill Gasiamis 53:03

And that external muscle look is kind of good for meeting the right girl or Yeah, showing that you're good, good genes and you've got good quality reproductive organs and all that kind of stuff, but and it helps to keep you fit and well it does. It's really important. But it's not the only one we need to broaden out.

Eddie Burnias 53:30

And eventually, all that fades like everything else in life. It fades because I was a

big man pretty I was a pretty man when I was a young kid. You know? Look at me now. I'm not as pretty I'm still pretty but that was you right? Yeah, but

Bill Gasiamis 53:50

um, but what was the hardest thing about stroke for you? So far? What do you think's the hardest thing so far?

Eddie Burnias 53:55

The hardest thing for me is number one is finding information on how to know, about stroke and stroke itself what physically and mentally happened. That's that was the hardest that is the hardest thing. Because I'm like I told you I still don't know what type of talk I've had.

Eddie Burnias 54:16

I was barely told this by my physician because I barely got my primary care in order. But information number one, it's hard to because there's nothing there's so lack of information out there that can help people prevent themselves from being in a situation like mine. That it's it's it's almost criminal. It is because if you know to prevent someone from hurting themselves, by all means, man, let's get it out there.

Eddie Burnias 54:52

You know, holding it back is not helping anybody or anything. But yeah, just getting the information is hard It was the hardest thing. The second thing is, the fact that you're changing, you change. It's like a light switch like I'm a different person. You know, I can feel it myself. I'm not as why, like I said, I'm more vocal, I am more emotional. I know that comes along with the stroke that, you know, the motions.

Eddie Burnias 55:25

Like I was like, read about we, you know how you would cry at anything, not in the same way. The other day, I was watching a movie and I was always crying, like, like a 12-year-old little girl. And my wife comes in and she's like, What are you doing? And I'm all Forrest Gump man, Hey, Jenny, you know, she's leaving him. So it's changed and it changes everything. But it's, you know, there's, there's good points, but you know, but it's hard.

Eddie Burnias 55:56

This is an easy getting up and walking. The first week or two, when I started

having, you know, you have to do it. But when I started doing it, it wasn't easy. Because I could, you know, you I would walk but I would get a sore bath. My body would always have, it feels like you're half of my body's working and the other one isn't. So you have to focus, where before you can just walk without thinking. But now it's like, I gotta focus.

Eddie Burnias 56:30

Even to this day, if I you know, I can't run that's in that so much want to run that's, that's my goal is I want to be able to run, I can set my job. But I gotta focus on where I'm putting my foot because if I'm not, it just goes in a diary. It just does what it does. I can't control it. I have a feeling on my arm. But on the bottom of my right leg, it's like, you can pick me and I won't feel it, you can hit me with a stick. And it's like a mountain. I don't like a little brush.

Eddie Burnias 57:06

But it's like, you know, I have to focus on things now that I've never thought of before. Before it was just running was, you know, you run that walking, but now it's like you got this, I can think of the steps I'm taking if I'm walking up a hill, or the pavement is uneven, I have to calculate that if I don't have like a normal strip.

Eddie Burnias 57:29

It's like when you're walking in you forget to call on on the rug. Well, that's happened quite a bit with you know, because I'm not, you know, I'm thinking that I'm better. And I'm thinking okay, here, I'm going in I walk, I'm walking on uneven pavement, but my mind is not registering it because I don't feel on the right side, like I did before, you know, before you could feel it, or you can even see the heel coming.

Eddie Burnias 57:53

But you don't have you don't see a protrusion coming out of the concrete or whatnot. And it's, it's a process. So now you have to be aware of everything about your surroundings, where you're going what you're doing before that's something you just don't take into consideration, and that takes a lot more.

Stroke recovery with a survivor and expert

insights

Bill Gasiamis 58:15

That takes a lot more to pay attention and do the walking and paying attention at the same time. What stroke taught you?

Eddie Burnias 58:26

So far, because I'm so new to where it's taught me that, you know, life is shorter than we would think. And what do you do with it if it is hugely important? You know, all the money in the world, all the material things don't mean anything. It's it's what you do to get emotional. But yeah, it's what you do you know, everybody has a gift. And, and I can use it.

Bill Gasiamis 59:09

That's important. So that's leading to my next question, which is what do you want to tell other people who have had a stroke and listening to do I just started their journey? Or maybe they're a few years into their journey? What do you want to tell them?

Eddie Burnias 59:26

That they're not alone? That there are others out there like us and I know there are people that get like, Why me? Why my attitude? And I don't want to be here. That's not the answer. There's someone out there for you and there's people that will listen.

Bill Gasiamis 59:57

Reach out for help.

Eddie Burnias 59:58

You have to excuse me, I'm not used to getting emotional like this

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:04

It's new. I know, I've been there. It's good that you're allowing yourself to be that way, man, it's understandable, it's uncomfortable, and it will get better. It's also going to be okay that it's days a little bit as well that you're going to be a little bit emotional. It's really important, I think, for anybody but for men to be emotional.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:32

And you're gonna want to think it does it permits other men in your life to be

emotional as well. Like, I cry in front of the kids all the time now and my wife and my kids are 27 and 23. So they have an example of how you can be vulnerable, how you can cry if you need to cry, and how if something saddens you it's okay to express it and to be saddened by it. And not to you don't need to put a brave face on all the time.

Eddie Burnias 1:01:07

Like I was saying, My son is 32 years old. I'm 54 he barely saw me cry, for the first time. You know, that's yeah, this whole situation, got us closer, it has opened doors that I never thought, you know, that probably would have never been opened before. You know, I'll be honest with you, I wouldn't have I wouldn't have been as vocal before.

Eddie Burnias 1:01:37

My kids, you know, especially boys are just like, before, you know, like I've gotten, you know, they scrape themselves, I don't cry, you know, you're not bleeding, you're fine. You know, that type of attitude. And it's, and now I have grandchildren. And if I don't want to, I don't want that same attitude. We need to change.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:58

Yeah, I know, you're looking after your health and you're making sure that you're taking your medication.

Eddie Burnias 1:02:03

Yeah, definitely. Definitely. Am, with people like yourself, help with your book, and your podcast. You know, this is an ongoing journey, and when I'm glad to be on, and I thank you for your help.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:20

That's my pleasure. Mike, thank you so much for being on the podcast. Thank you. Thanks for joining us on today's episode, get a copy of my book by going to recoveryafterstroke.com/book. To learn more about my guests, including links to their social media, and to download a transcript of the entire interview, go to recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:44

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Bill Gasiamis 1:03:14

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Bill Gasiamis 1:03:36

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Bill Gasiamis 1:04:03

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Bill Gasiamis 1:04:23

Just go to recoveryaftershow.com/contact Fill out the form explaining which category you belong to and a little bit about yourself and your story. And I will send you some more details of how we can connect via Zoom. Thanks again for being here and listening. I do deeply appreciate you. See you in the next episode.

Intro 1:04:43

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Intro 1:05:00

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Intro 1:05:23

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Intro 1:05:30

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Intro 1:05:30

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