



Facts About Heart Disease and Stroke in African-American Women

Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 killer of all American women. African American women are at greater risk for cardiovascular disease than any other ethnic group, yet they are less likely than white women to know that they may have major risk factors. Diabetes, smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, physical inactivity, overweight/obesity and family history of heart disease are all greatly prevalent among African Americans and are major risk factors for cardiovascular disease, including stroke. Fewer than half of African American women (41%) consider themselves well informed about cardiovascular disease.*

- African-Americans are at greater risk for heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases than Caucasians. The prevalence of these diseases in black females is 44.7 percent, compared to 32.4 percent in white females.
- African-American males and females have higher death rates from heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases than white males and females.
- High blood pressure is a leading cause of stroke. The rate of high blood pressure for non-Hispanic black females age 20 and older is 45.4 percent.
- Compared with Caucasian women, African-American women have an 85 percent higher rate of ambulatory medical care visits for high blood pressure.
- As many as 20 percent of all deaths in hypertensive African-American women may be due to their high blood pressure.
- The risk of heart disease and stroke increases with physical inactivity. Physical inactivity is more prevalent in women, African-Americans and Hispanics. For African-American females age 18 and older, 55.1 percent are inactive, compared to 38.3 percent of white females.
- Among non-Hispanic black females ages 20 and older, 77.2 percent are overweight or obese.
- Of people 18 and older, 18.5 percent of black or African-American females smoke, putting themselves at increased risk for heart attack and stroke.

Source: Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics – 2005 Update

For additional information contact **American Heart Association** at (888) MY-HEART or visit goredforwomen.org.

* Survey conducted August 2003 (prior to campaign launch).