



*Be One in a Million Hearts™*

# About Heart Disease & Stroke

## Risk Factors

We're all at risk for heart disease and stroke. However, certain groups—including African Americans, older individuals, and women—are at higher risk than others. With more than 2 million heart attacks and strokes happening every year in the United States, it's important to know the risks.

## Heart Disease and Age

Many people mistakenly think of heart disease and stroke as conditions that only affect older adults. However, a large number of younger people suffer heart attacks and strokes. More than 150,000 heart disease and stroke deaths every year are among people younger than 65.

## Heart Disease and Race

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States for adults of all races. However, there are big differences in the rates of heart disease and stroke between different racial and ethnic groups. Some minority groups are more likely to be affected by heart disease and stroke than others—which contributes to lower life expectancy found among minorities.

As of 2007, African American men were 30% more likely to die from heart disease than were non-Hispanic white men. African American adults of both genders are 40% more likely to have high blood pressure and 10% less likely than their white counterparts to have their blood pressure under control. African Americans also have the highest rate of high blood pressure of all population groups, and they tend to develop it earlier in life than others.

## Heart Disease and Gender

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for American women, killing nearly 422,000 each year. Following a heart attack, approximately 1 in 4 women will die within the first year, compared to 1 in 5 men.

## Heart Disease and Income

Men and women of all economic backgrounds are at risk for heart disease and stroke. However, individuals with low incomes are much more likely to suffer from high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart attack, and stroke than their high-income peers.

This discrepancy is due to numerous factors, including early life environment, quality of health education, availability of nutritious food, proximity to recreational facilities, cultural and financial barriers to seeking treatment, and accessibility of cardiovascular care.

## Stroke and Race and Ethnicity

Stroke is among the five leading causes of death for people of all races and ethnicities. But the risk of having a stroke varies. Compared to whites, African Americans are at nearly twice the risk of having a first stroke. Hispanic Americans' risk falls between the two. Moreover, African Americans and Hispanics are more likely to die following a stroke than are whites.

## Stroke and Geography

The country's highest death rates due to stroke are in the southeastern United States.

## Americans at Risk

Approximately 49% of adults have at least one major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Below is the percentage of U.S. adults with heart disease and stroke risk factors in 2005–2006.

<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>%</b>
Inactivity	39.5
Obesity	33.9
High Blood Pressure	30.5
Cigarette Smoking	20.8
High Cholesterol	15.6
Diabetes	10.1

## Key Facts

- Many risk factors for heart disease and stroke—including high blood pressure and high cholesterol—may not have any symptoms.
- Most risk factors for heart disease and stroke—specifically high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, and obesity—are preventable and controllable.
- Controlling these risk factors could reduce risk of heart attack or stroke by more than 80%.
- When it comes to your blood pressure, you are in control.