

African-American Women

Heart Disease

- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for African-American women 20-years of age and older.¹
- African-Americans have a higher risk for cardiovascular disease than Caucasians and are less aware of their cardiovascular risk factors.²
- For African-American women over the age of 18, the rate of coronary heart disease is directly related to education, income and poverty status.^{3,4}

Health Risks

- More than 15% of African-American women say they are in fair or poor health, compared with 11% of Caucasian women.⁵
- African-American women have higher rates of obesity, physical inactivity, high blood pressure, and diabetes.⁶
- 26.7% of African-American women are overweight and another 51% of African-American women are obese.⁸
- 64% of African-American women are sedentary and get no leisure time physical activity.⁹
- Among African-American women over the age of 20, 45.7% have high blood pressure.⁸
- African-Americans bear a disproportionate burden of stroke, hypertension-related heart disease, congestive heart failure and hypertensive nephropathy (kidney disease), all due to undiagnosed or poor control of high blood pressure.
- African-American women are much more likely to lack a usual source of care and to encounter other difficulties in obtaining needed care.⁵

Care and Treatment

- African-Americans, both men and women, have had a long history of poor access to health care which continues today.
- African-American women, despite their higher risk of heart disease, were 10% less likely to receive aspirin and 27% less likely to receive cholesterol-lowering drugs.⁷
- African-Americans have not historically been enrolled in studies evaluating the treatment of cardiovascular risk factors or outcomes of lifestyle modification in the same numbers as their white counterparts.

1 National Center for Health Statistics. Deaths: Leading Causes for 2006. National Vital Statistics Reports. 2009;57(14):1-135.

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3 Ranjit, N, et al. Socioeconomic Position, Race/Ethnicity, and Inflammation in the Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis. *Circulation*. 2007;116(21):2383-90.

4 Center for Disease Control. Women and Heart Disease: An Atlas of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Mortality, 2nd Ed. Available at http://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Publications/womens_atlas/00-atlas-all.pdf.

5 Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Health Care for Minority Women: Program Brief. Available at <http://www.ahrq.gov/research/minority.htm>.

6 Lloyd-Jones D, Adams R, Brown T, et al. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics 2010 Update: A Report From the American Heart Association Statistics Committee and Stroke Statistics Subcommittee. *Circulation*. 2010;121:31-e170.

7 Jha AK, Varosy PD, Kanaya AM, et al. Differences in Medical Care and Disease Outcomes Among Black and White Women With Heart Disease. *Circulation*. 2003;108:1089-1094.

8 Roger V L, Go A S, Lloyd-Jones D, Adams R J, et al. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics 2011 Update: A Report from the American Heart Association Statistics Committee and Stroke Statistics Subcommittee. *Circulation*. 2011; 121:e1-e192.

9 Pleis JR, Lucas JW. Summary health statistics for U.S. adults: National Health Interview Survey, 2007. *Vital Health Stat 10*. 2009; No. 240: 1-159.