

Facts About Cardiovascular Disease

The following information was derived from the American Heart Association's Web site.

Women and Cardiovascular Diseases

The following facts and figures are presented in the American Heart Association's *Evidence-Based Guidelines for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in Women: 2007 Update*.¹

- Worldwide, cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the largest single cause of death among women, accounting for one third of all deaths.
- In the United States, 38.2 million women (34%) are living with CVD, and the population at risk is even larger.
- The human toll and economic impact of CVD are difficult to overstate. In the United States alone, \$403 billion was estimated to be spent in 2006 on health care or in lost productivity as a result of CVD, compared with \$190 billion for cancer and \$29 billion for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- Prevention of CVD is paramount to the health of every woman and every nation. Even modest control could have an enormous impact. It is projected that a reduction in the death rate due to chronic diseases by just 2% over 1 decade would prevent 36 million deaths.
- Fortunately, most CVD in women is preventable.

The American Heart Association also shares the following facts about minority women and cardiovascular diseases on its Web site:²

- CVD is a particularly important problem among minority women. The death rate due to CVD is substantially higher in black women than in white women.
- A 2003 American Heart Association study of over 1,000 women conducted by Harris Interactive, Inc., revealed the lack of understanding women have of the dangers of heart disease and stroke.
 - According to the results, a mere 13 percent of women in America believe that heart disease and stroke are the greatest health threat to women.
 - In addition, despite the fact that minority women face the highest risk of death from heart disease and stroke, they have lower risk factor awareness.

¹ "Evidence-Based Guidelines for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in Women: 2007 Update." American Heart Association. <http://circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/full/CIRCULATIONAHA.107.181546>. Accessed April 26, 2007.

² "Facts about women and cardiovascular diseases ." American Heart Association. <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=2876>. Accessed April 26, 2007.

African Americans and Cardiovascular Disease³

Statistics show that African-Americans and Hispanics/Latinos have a higher risk for cardiovascular disease than Caucasians and are less aware of their cardiovascular risk factors.

Research studies reveal that cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for African-American males and females age 20 and older.

³ “Search Your Heart Program.” American Heart Association.
<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3041580>. Accessed April 26, 2007.