

# New statistics show one of every three US deaths caused by cardiovascular disease

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One of every three deaths in the U.S. in 2013 were from heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases, while heart disease and stroke were the No. 1 and No. 2 killers worldwide, according to American Heart Association's 2016 Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update.

Produced since 1958, the update is created from the most-recent data available and compiled by the AHA, the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other government sources.

"Statistics about [cardiovascular disease](#) and stroke, and particularly the metrics about death and the factors that contribute to cardiovascular disease are incredibly important," said AHA President Mark Creager, M.D., director of the Heart and Vascular Center at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

He said the information helps the AHA track the effectiveness of its efforts.

Despite the progress in reducing the number of deaths from heart disease and stroke, Creager said, the numbers are still too high.

In the U.S. the data showed:

- cardiovascular diseases claimed 801,000 lives;
- [heart disease](#) killed more than 370,000 people;

- stroke killed nearly 129,000 people;
- about 116,000 of the 750,000 people in the U.S. who had a heart attack died;
- about 795,000 people had a stroke, the leading preventable cause of disability;
- among African-Americans adults, 48 percent of women and 46 percent of men have some form of cardiovascular disease; and
- African-Americans have nearly twice the risk for a first-ever stroke than whites.

Cardiovascular disease is not only the top killer in the United States, but worldwide, said David S. Siscovick, M.D. M.P.H., chair of AHA's Council on Epidemiology and Prevention and senior vice president for research at the New York Academy of Medicine in New York City. Hypertension, obesity and diabetes are global epidemics, he said.

The data showed globally that:

- 31 percent of all deaths were from cardiovascular disease, with 80 percent occurring in low- and middle-income countries as of 2013;
- stroke accounted for 11.8 percent of all deaths, and;
- 16.9 million people worldwide had a first [stroke](#) in 2010.

Over the decades, the statistical update has expanded to include information about health disparities, the global impact of cardiovascular disease and [risk factors](#), Siscovick said.

The update now tracks health factors and behaviors known to contribute to good cardiovascular health, referred to by the AHA as Life's Simple 7. These include smoking status, physical activity, healthy diet, body weight, and control of cholesterol, [blood pressure](#) and blood sugar.

Among these factors:

- nearly 19 percent of men and 15 percent of women in the U.S. were cigarette smokers in 2014, despite a 30 percent drop in cigarette smoking since 1998;
- about one in three U.S. adults in 2014 reported no [physical activity](#) outside of work;
- the proportion of people consuming an ideal diet increased from 0.2 percent to 0.6 percent in children, and from 0.7 percent to 1.5 percent in adults between 2003 - 2004 and 2011 - 2012;
- nearly 160 million people in the U.S. were overweight or obese: 69 percent of adults and 32 percent of children in 2009-2012;
- 13 million U.S. adults, about 17 percent, were obese in 2009-2012;
- about 43 percent of Americans had total cholesterol of 200 mg/dL or higher from 2009-2012;
- about 80 million U.S. adults, 33 percent, had [high blood pressure](#) in 2009-2012;
- among African-American adults, 46 percent of women and 45 percent of men have high blood pressure; and
- about 9 percent of Americans have diagnosed diabetes and 35 percent have pre-diabetes.

Siscovick said the stats show a clear potential to better prevent and manage cardiovascular diseases. The challenge is making prevention part of our culture, he said.

"We need to maintain our vigor and resolve in promoting good cardiovascular health through lifestyle and recognition and treatment of risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol and smoking," Creager said. "We've made progress in the fight against cardiovascular disease, but the battle is not won."

**More information:** 2016 Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update,  
[circ.ahajournals.org/lookup/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000350](https://circ.ahajournals.org/lookup/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000350)

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