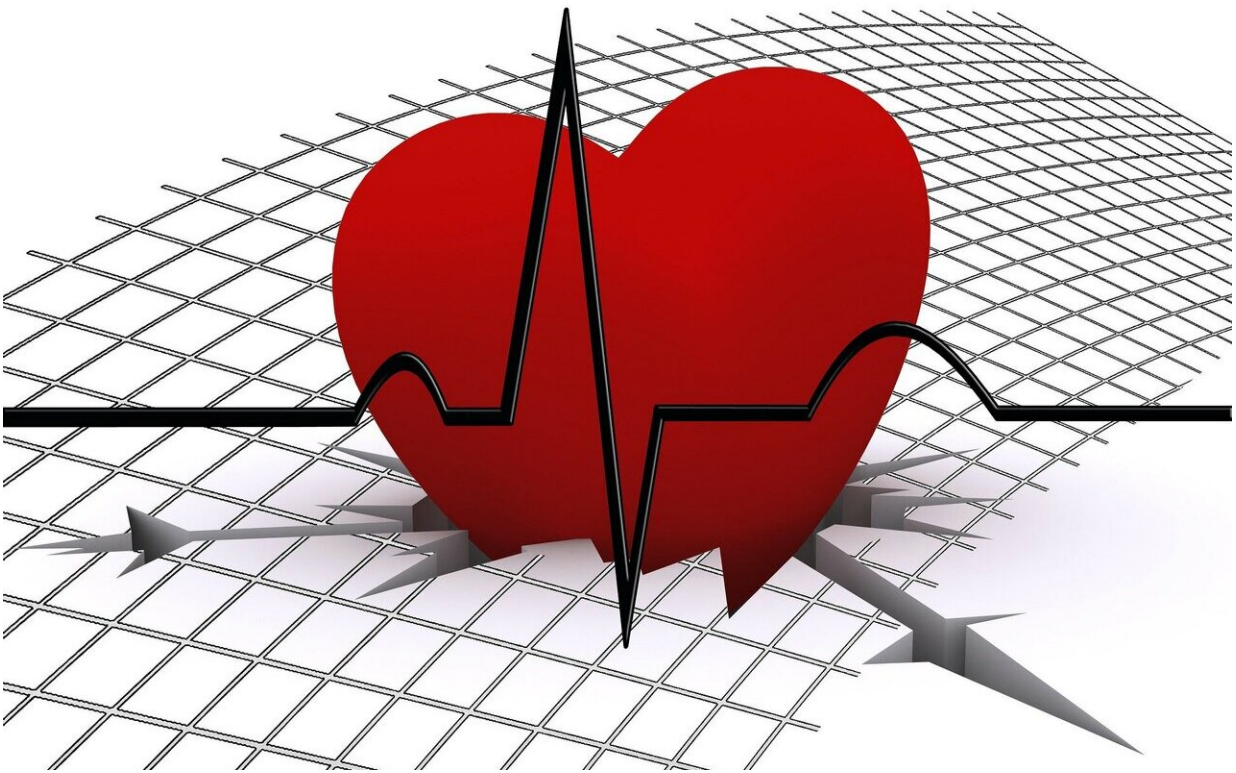


New CDC stats: Adults expected to live a little longer, heart disease still top killer

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Life expectancy increased in 2018 for the first time in several years, and the rate of heart disease deaths saw a slight dip—though it remains the nation's top killer, according to new federal reports.

Adults gained 1.2 months, or 36 days, in life expectancy compared to 2017, according to data released Thursday from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The modest increase is welcome news given it was the first uptick since 2014. Life expectancy at birth increased from 78.6 years in 2017 to 78.7 in 2018, largely because of decreases in deaths from heart disease, cancer, unintentional injuries and chronic lower respiratory diseases.

Heart disease, the leading cause of death, killed 655,381 people in the United States in 2018. The rate was 163.6 deaths per 100,000 people, compared to 165 deaths in 2017.

The news should be celebrated, but there is plenty of room for improvement, said Dr. Robert Harrington, chair of the department of medicine at Stanford University in California and president of the American Heart Association.

"Certainly, it's important news, and it's nice after some years of decline in stats to see an improvement," Harrington said. "We're cautiously pleased, but there's clearly an enormous amount of work to do. All of the things AHA has grouped into an advocacy platform and science base, we need to double down the efforts because there's a long way to go."

Cancer took the No. 2 spot on the list of deadly threats, with accidents and lower respiratory disease in third and fourth. Stroke is the fifth-leading cause of death and killed 147,810 people in 2018. The rate of stroke deaths remained about the same—37.1 per 100,000 people in 2018 compared with 37.6 in 2017.

This week, the AHA said its most recent 2020 statistics showed more people are living longer but in poorer health that is striking at a younger age. To address the problem, the AHA issued a presidential advisory in the journal *Circulation* outlining new national and global 2030 Impact

Goals to help increase the number of healthy years.

The last decade has seen improvements in lifestyle behaviors across U.S. residents that have helped many people stave off heart disease and stroke, Harrington said. For example, people are paying more attention to diet, managing their cholesterol and kicking the cigarette habit.

But many trends—particularly among children and [young adults](#)—leave medical professionals concerned for future generations.

"This will be our north star for the next 10 years," Harrington said. "The focus will be on trying to improve healthy living for the next decade."

Here are other highlights from the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics reports:

- The 10 leading causes of death, in order, are [heart disease](#), cancer, unintentional injuries, chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, flu and pneumonia, kidney [disease](#) and suicide.
- For males, life expectancy changed from 76.1 years in 2017 to 76.2 in 2018—an increase of 0.1 year. For females, [life expectancy](#) increased 0.1 year, from 81.1 years in 2017 to 81.2 in 2018.
- A total of 658 women died of maternal causes in the U.S. in 2018, and their death rate per 100,000 [live births](#) was 17.4.
- In 2018, there were 67,367 [drug overdose deaths](#)—4.1% fewer deaths than the year before.
- The drug overdose death rate was lower in 2018 than 2017 for 15 jurisdictions: Alaska, Washington, D.C., Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Wisconsin.
- The drug overdose [death](#) rate was higher in 2018 than 2017 for

five states: California, Delaware, Missouri, New Jersey and South Carolina.

More information: Salim S. Virani et al. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2020 Update, *Circulation* (2020). [DOI: 10.1161/CIR.0000000000000757](https://doi.org/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000757)

Sonia Y. Angell et al. The American Heart Association 2030 Impact Goal: A Presidential Advisory From the American Heart Association, *Circulation* (2020). [DOI: 10.1161/CIR.0000000000000758](https://doi.org/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000758)

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