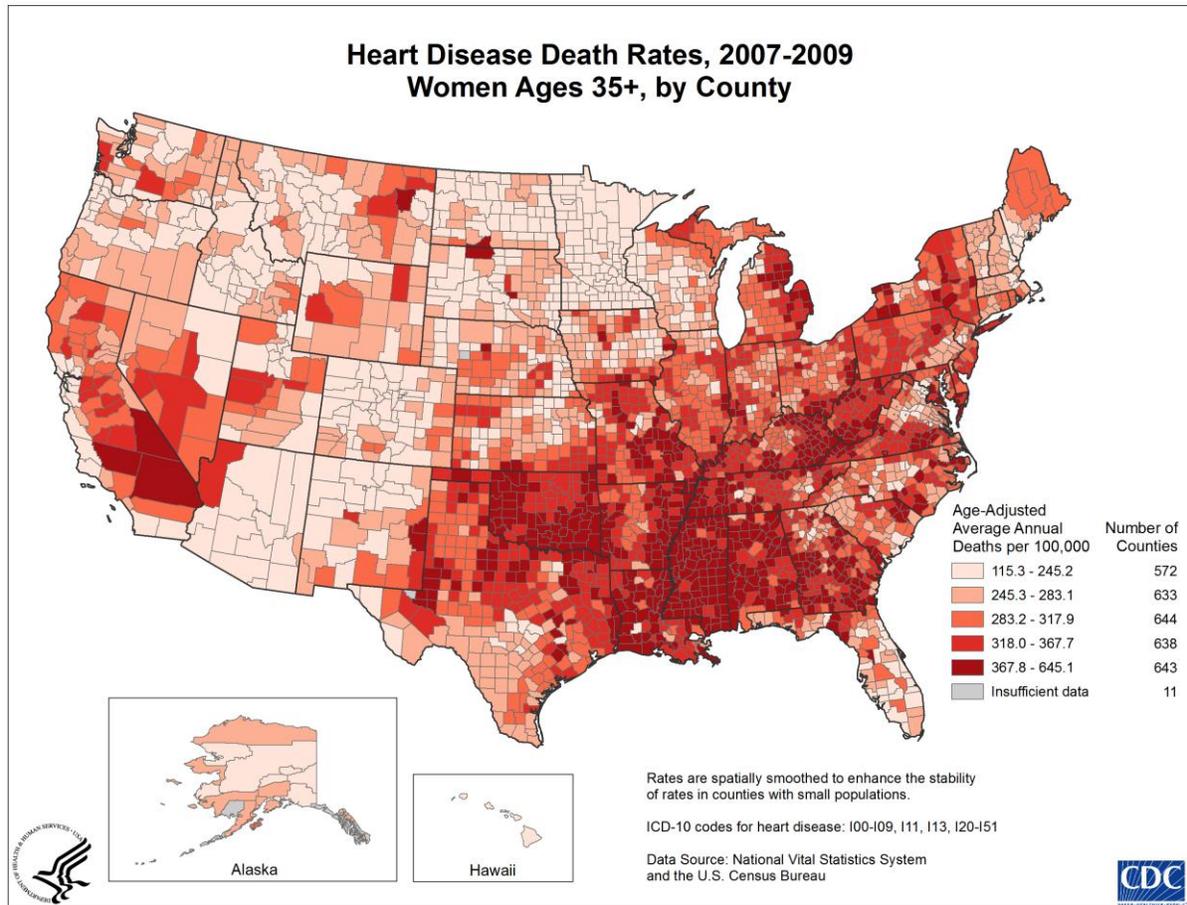


Women and Heart Disease Fact Sheet



Facts on Women and Heart Disease

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States, killing 292,188 women in 2009—**that's 1 in every 4** female deaths.¹
- Although heart disease is sometimes thought of as a "man's disease," around the same number of women and men die each year of heart disease in the United States. Despite increases in awareness over the past decade, **only 54%** of women recognize that heart disease is their **number 1 killer**.²
- Heart disease is the **leading cause** of death for African American and white women in the United States. Among Hispanic women, heart disease and cancer cause roughly the same number of deaths each year. For American Indian or Alaska Native and Asian or Pacific Islander women, heart disease is second only to cancer.³

- About 5.8% of all white women, 7.6% of black women, and 5.6% of Mexican American women have coronary heart disease.⁴
- Almost **two-thirds** (64%) of women who die suddenly of coronary heart disease have **no previous symptoms**.⁴ Even if you have no symptoms, you may still be at risk for heart disease.

Risk Factors

High blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, and smoking are key risk factors for heart disease. About **half of Americans** (49%) have at least one of these three risk factors.⁵

Several other medical conditions and lifestyle choices can also put people at a higher risk for heart disease, including:

- Diabetes
- Overweight and obesity
- Poor diet
- Physical inactivity
- Excessive alcohol use

CDC's Public Health Efforts

Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation (WISEWOMAN)

WISEWOMAN is a CDC program that helps women with little or no health insurance reduce their risk for heart disease, stroke, and other chronic diseases. The program assists women ages 40 to 64 in improving their diet, physical activity, and other behaviors. WISEWOMAN also provides cholesterol tests and other screening. CDC funds 21 WISEWOMAN projects in 19 states and two tribal organizations.

CDC's Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program

Since 1998, CDC has funded state health departments' efforts to reduce the number of people with heart disease or stroke. Health departments in 41 states and the District of Columbia currently receive funding. The program stresses policy and education to promote heart-healthy and stroke-free living and working conditions.

Million Hearts™

Million Hearts™ is a national, public-private initiative of the Department of Health and Human Services to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. Co-led by CDC and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the initiative brings together communities, health care professionals, health systems, nonprofit organizations, federal agencies, and private-sector partners to improve care and empower Americans to make heart-healthy choices.

For More Information

For more information on women and heart disease, visit the following Web sites:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [American Heart Association](#)
- [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#)

References

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4. Roger VL, Go AS, Lloyd-Jones DM, Benjamin EJ, Berry JD, Borden WB, et al. [Heart disease and stroke statistics—2012 update: a report from the American Heart Association](#). *Circulation*. 2012;125(1):e2–220.
5. CDC. [Million Hearts: strategies to reduce the prevalence of leading cardiovascular disease risk factors](#). United States, 2011. *MMWR* 2011;60(36):1248–51.