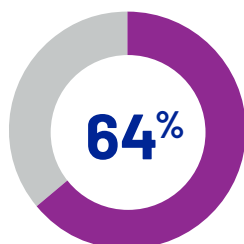


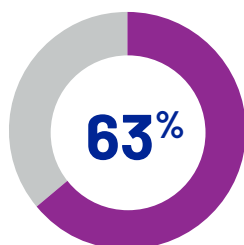
What are adverse childhood experiences?



U.S. ADULTS WHO
REPORT AT LEAST
ONE ACE

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that happen before age 18. These include abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), neglect or witnessing violence at home. ACEs also include household issues like substance abuse, mental illness, divorce or having a family member in jail. Other ACEs can involve not having enough food, being homeless or facing discrimination. These experiences cause long-lasting stress. Over time, ACEs can harm a child's health, learning and well-being. About 64% of U.S. adults report at least one ACE, and about 1 in 6 report four or more.

What is cardiovascular disease?

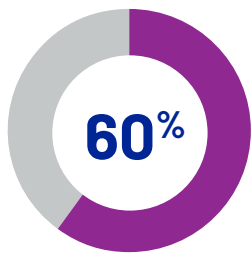


OF WOMEN ARE
MORE LIKELY
TO DEVELOP HEART
DISEASE IF THEY
HAD HIGH BLOOD
PRESSURE DURING
PREGNANCY

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) includes heart and blood vessel problems like heart disease, heart attacks, heart failure and strokes. Many of these are caused by atherosclerosis, which is when plaque builds up in the walls of the arteries. This buildup can block blood flow and lead to a heart attack or stroke. **In California and the U.S., heart disease is the leading cause of death.** Risk factors include using tobacco products, breathing in secondhand smoke, stress, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, unhealthy diet, lack of exercise, obesity and heavy alcohol use (for example, eight or more drinks a week for women, 15 or more drinks a week for men). To prevent heart disease, avoid smoking, eat well and stay active.

Maternal health and cardiovascular disease

A mother's health during pregnancy can impact her heart health later. Problems like high blood pressure, preeclampsia or gestational hypertension during pregnancy can increase the risk of heart disease in the future. For example, women who have high blood pressure during pregnancy are 63% more likely to develop heart disease later. Preeclampsia almost doubles the risk of heart disease and stroke. Doctors now recommend women with these problems get regular heart check-ups after pregnancy.



HIGHER RISK OF DYING
BY MIDDLE AGE
FROM MODERATE
ACE EXPOSURE



**Eat lots of
fruits and
vegetables
and avoid
fat, salt
and sugar**

How do adverse childhood experiences affect future heart health?

Childhood trauma can lead to higher heart risk as an adult. **People with many ACEs are much more likely to get heart disease.** In one study, those with severe ACEs were about 50% more likely to develop heart disease later. Even moderate ACE exposure led to a 60% higher risk of dying by middle age. Stress from ACEs can lead to unhealthy habits (like smoking or overeating) and biological changes that raise heart risk. Experts estimate preventing childhood trauma could prevent about 1.9 million heart disease cases in the U.S.

Preventing adverse childhood experiences

Help children by creating safe and supportive homes and communities.

This means positive parenting, mental health support and providing resources like food, housing and counseling. Programs like home visits and parenting classes help build resilience.

Preventing cardiovascular disease

Follow a heart-healthy lifestyle. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables and avoid foods high in fat, salt and sugar. Get regular exercise, like 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of intense activity each week. Don't use tobacco products and limit alcohol. Check your blood pressure and cholesterol often. **Keeping your blood pressure and cholesterol in check can greatly reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke.**

California programs to improve maternal, child and heart health

The California Surgeon General's Strong Start and Beyond campaign aims to cut maternal deaths in half by 2026. It provides resources and services for families before, during and after pregnancy, especially in affected communities.

The Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Program (CDPP) is part of the California Department of Public Health. CDPP aims to improve the heart health of Californians. Their goals include updating California's Cardiovascular Health State Plan and focusing on prevention to stop heart problems before they start.

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