



African American Health Statistics

The African American community is disproportionately affected by obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and certain types of cancer. The *Network for a Healthy California—African American Campaign* was created by the California Department of Public Health to invigorate and engage the African American community in developing programs and strategies for improving this health crisis.

RISK FACTORS

Diet

- African American adults, on average, consume only 4.3 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, compared to the statewide average of 5.2 servings.¹
- Only 39 percent of African American adults eat 5 or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables, compared to 50 percent for all adults statewide.¹
- The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults eat 3½ to 6½ cups of fruits and vegetables, which is about double that of the previous recommendation of 5 servings (about 2½ cups).

Motivators and Barriers

- Among African Americans who think they should eat more fruits and vegetables, over 75 percent listed difficulty buying fruits and vegetables at fast food places as the leading barrier to eating more fruits and vegetables. Other barriers were that fruits and vegetables are hard to get at work (64%), hard to buy in restaurants (32%), and too expensive (32%).²

Physical Activity

- Nearly half (48%) of African Americans reported that they did not participate in the recommended levels of physical activity (30 minutes of moderate physical activity, 5 days a week, or 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity 3 days a week), which was very similar to the 49 percent for all adults statewide.³

- In California, 23 percent of African Americans reported that they did not participate in any leisure time physical activity in the past month, which was the same as the rate for all adults statewide.³

Overweight and Obesity

- 41 percent of African American adults in California are obese and 35 percent are overweight according to self-reported heights and weights.³
- In total, 76 percent of African American adults in California are overweight or obese, compared to 59 percent for all adults statewide.³

Food Security

- 42 percent of low-income African American adults in California were not able to afford enough food in 2007.⁴
- In 2007, 17 percent of food stamp recipients⁵ or approximately 350,000 people, were African American in California.⁶
- In California, 29 percent of African Americans were income-eligible for food stamps in 2000.⁷

CHRONIC DISEASE

Heart Disease

- Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) rank as the number one killer of African Americans, claiming the lives of over one-third of the more than 292,000 African Americans who die each year.⁸

- Of African Americans (non-Hispanic) 20 years and older, 46 percent have CVD. This includes diseases of the heart, stroke, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, congenital heart defects, hardening of the arteries, and other diseases of the circulatory system.⁹
- The rate of high blood pressure in African Americans in the United States is among the highest in the world at about 44 percent. African Americans develop high blood pressure earlier in life and have much higher average blood pressures compared to whites, contributing to a higher rate of fatal stroke.⁹

Cancer

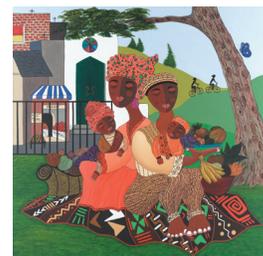
- Among African Americans in the U.S., 63,360 are expected to die from cancer, and 150,090 new cancer cases are estimated to be diagnosed in 2009.¹⁰
- African American men are more likely to develop and die from some diet-related cancers, such as prostate and stomach cancer, than white men. African American women are more likely to develop and die from some diet-related cancers, such as colon and rectum and stomach cancer, than white women.¹⁰
- African Americans are less likely to survive for 5 years after being diagnosed with cancer than whites. This may be due in part to barriers to the receipt of timely or quality medical care, which results in diagnosis at a later stage when the disease has spread to other tissues.¹⁰

Diabetes

- In 2005, approximately 3.7 million or 12 percent of African Americans in the U.S. over 20 years old had diabetes.¹¹
- Among African Americans in California, 12 percent reported they had been diagnosed with diabetes, which is 1.7 times the rate of white Californians.¹²
- Compared to whites, African Americans experience higher rates of diabetes complications such as kidney failure and amputations.¹³

Leading Causes of Death

- Heart disease and cancer are the first and second leading causes of death for African Americans in California¹⁴ and nationally.⁸
- Heart disease and cancer combined to account for half of deaths among African Americans in California¹⁴ and for nearly half (47%) of all deaths among African Americans nationally.⁸
- Diabetes was the fifth leading cause of death among African Americans¹⁵, accounting for 860 deaths in California¹⁴ and 12,970 deaths nationally.⁸



This information is brought to you by the *Network for a Healthy California—African American Campaign*.
Visit us at www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net.

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