

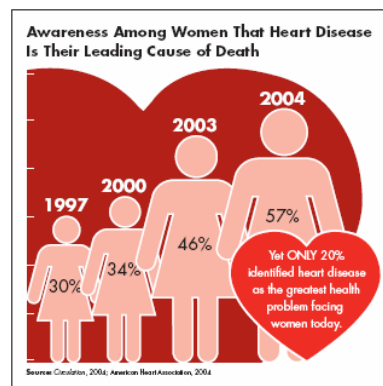


Women's Top Health Threats

Rank	Cause	Percentage of female deaths
1	Heart Disease	28.6
2	Cancer	21.6
3	Stroke	8.0
4	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	5.2
5	Alzheimer's disease	3.4
6	Diabetes	3.1
7	Unintentional injuries	3.0
8	Influenza and pneumonia	3.0
9	Kidney disease	1.7
10	Septicemia	1.5

No 1- Heart Disease

Heart disease is the most significant health concern for women in the United States today, responsible for nearly 489,000 deaths each year. This may come as a surprise for most women since it is customary to think that breast cancer is the No. 1 threat to women's health. In fact, heart disease is responsible for more deaths in women than all forms of cancer combined. Luckily, heart disease is one of the most preventable health conditions.



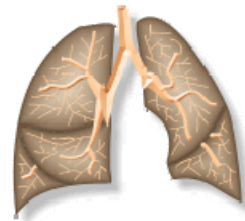
To help reduce your risk:



- Avoid smoking and limit the amount of alcohol consumed
- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products
- Exercise regularly
- Control other health conditions that may put a strain on the heart, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes

No 2- Cancer

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), the most common cause of cancer death in U.S. women is lung cancer. It's estimated that more than 73,000 women in the United States will die of lung cancer in 2005, with 90 percent of these deaths linked to cigarette smoking. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in U.S. women. It is estimated that more than 211,00 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2005. The ACS estimates that ~40,000 women die of breast cancer each year. The third leading cause of cancer death for women is colorectal cancer. It's often thought of, much like heart disease, to be a man's disease. However, many women die each year of colorectal cancer. Estimates suggest about 28,000 women die annually in the U.S. from it. At least 1/3 of all cancer deaths are related to nutrition and other controllable lifestyle factors.



To help
reduce
cancer risk:



- Don't smoke
- Exercise regularly
- Eat a healthy diet
- Avoid excessive sun exposure
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink
- Have regular preventative health screenings
- Know your family medical history and review it with your doctor



No 3-Stroke



Nearly 163,000 people die each year of stroke in the US, and nearly 2/3 of them are women. Stroke is one of the leading causes of disability in America. Smoking and uncontrolled high blood pressure are important risk factors for stroke. Although many aspects can be controlled to help reduce the risk of stroke, there are some which cannot be. These include: family history, age, sex, and race.

Factors that help
reduce your risk:



- Avoid smoking
- Control blood pressure
- Lower cholesterol
- Limit saturated fats

No 4- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

About 64,000 women in the U.S. die of COPD each year. The quality of life for a person with COPD diminishes as the disease progresses. Shortness of breath and activity limitations develop. Eventually, an oxygen tank may be required or even mechanical respiratory assistance may be needed to breathe. To reduce the risk of dying from COPD, avoid smoking and secondhand smoke.



No 5- Alzheimer's disease



Alzheimer's disease affecting an estimated 4.5 million Americans, is a progressive, degenerative brain disorder. What could initially begin as slight memory loss and confusion eventually can lead to irreversible mental impairment. This condition affects more women than men. Nearly 42,000 women die of Alzheimer's each year at more than twice the incidence of men. On average women live longer than men. Since the risk of Alzheimer's is known to increase with age, this could be a possible explanation of why it is more commonly seen in women.

No 6- Diabetes

Diabetes is a serious health condition that affects about 18 million Americans. In 2002, it claimed the lives of more than 73,000 people in the US, over half of which were women. It has been estimated that 5 million Americans don't even know that they have the condition. It is not until life-threatening complications set in that some become aware of the condition. Advanced diabetes can cause blindness, kidney failure, and severe nerve damage. Individuals with diabetes are also two to four times more likely to suffer from stroke and die of heart disease. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form and can be prevented.



To help
reduce
your risk:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Eat a healthy diet
- Exercise regularly
- Get fasting blood sugar level checked periodically



No 7- Accidents (Unintentional injuries)

Each year, more than 37,000 women die from accidents.

- Motor vehicle accidents- More than 1/3 of all accidental deaths for women in 2002 were due to traffic-related accidents.
- Falls- One out of every three people over the age of 75 falls each year, and about 7,800 women in the U.S. die from such falls.



No 8- Pneumonia and influenza

Combined, pneumonia and influenza took the lives of more than 36,000 women in 2002. Pneumonia and influenza can be life-threatening when combined with other chronic conditions, such as COPD, asthma, heart disease, diabetes, and conditions that suppress the immune system. The risk of both pneumonia and influenza can be reduced by immunizations. Yearly flu shots can be up to 90% effective in preventing influenza in healthy adults, and the pneumococcal vaccine can reduce the risk of pneumonia by more than half.

Putting health risks into perspective

It is important to realize that this ranking of health risks applies to the entire population of women in the U.S., no matter the age. But, for specific age groups, the leading cause of death can change. Here is an example. Although it is true that during the course of the entire life, heart disease is the number one health threat, in the 20s, accidents are the top health threat, and from ages 35-64, the greatest health risk is cancer.

- We should be concerned about health risks, but not panic.
- Start early.
- Do what you can do now.

Leading a healthy lifestyle— including eating healthy foods, staying physically active, getting regular checkups, and paying attention to the environment are measures that can greatly reduce the risk factors for negative health conditions and contribute to an overall long and healthy life.

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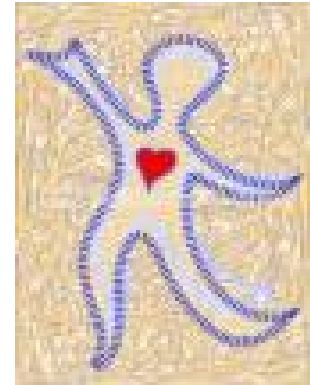
Division of Education

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7/05

Sites:

Women's top health threats:
<http://www.mayoclinic.com>
<http://www.cdc.gov>



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2. Experimental Obesity
3. Functional Foods
4. Health and Performance Enhancement
5. Nutrition and Chronic Diseases
6. Nutrition and the Brain

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