Cardiovascular Health

By 2020, to improve the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20 percent, while reducing deaths from cardiovascular diseases and stroke by 20 percent.

Definition of Cardiovascular Health

In order to accurately measure Americans’ cardiovascular health and monitor progress toward the 2020 goal, the American Heart Association (AHA) for the first time defined “ideal cardiovascular health.” AHA defines it as the absence of disease and the presence of seven key health factors and behaviors that we call “Life’s Simple 7.” Below are the measurements used to determine whether someone is in ideal, intermediate or poor cardiovascular health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life’s Simple 7</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Ideal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blood Pressure</td>
<td>SBP 140 or DBP 90 mm Hg or treated to goal</td>
<td>SBP 120-129 or DBP 80-89 mm Hg or treated to goal</td>
<td>&lt;120/80 mm Hg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Activity</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1-149 min/wk mod or vig or 2-149 min/wk mod + vig</td>
<td>150+ min/wk or 75+ min/wk vig or 150 min/wk mod + vig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
<td>240 &lt; 170 mg/dL</td>
<td>200-229 mg/dL or treated to goal</td>
<td>&lt;170 mg/dL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Diet</td>
<td>0-1 components</td>
<td>2 or more components</td>
<td>4 or more components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Weight</td>
<td>BMI &gt; 25 kg/m²</td>
<td>BMI 18.5-24.9 kg/m²</td>
<td>&lt;25 kg/m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking Status</td>
<td>Current Smoker</td>
<td>Former ≥ 12 mos</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Prevalence for Cardiovascular Health Factors in U.S. Children

- Few US children (≈5%) meet only 0, 1, or 2 criteria for ideal cardiovascular health.
- Nearly half of US children (54%) meet 3 or 4 criteria for ideal cardiovascular health, and ≈41% meet 5 or 6 criteria (mostly 5 criteria).
- <1% of children meet all 7 criteria for ideal cardiovascular health.
- Approximately 46% of US children 12 to 19 years of age have ≥5 metrics at ideal levels, with slightly lower prevalence in boys (44%) than in girls (47%).

CV Health in Adults

- Approximately 3% of US adults have 0 of the 7 criteria at ideal levels, and another 15% meet only 1 of 7 criteria. This is much worse than among children.
- Most US adults (≈65%) have 2, 3, or 4 criteria at ideal cardiovascular health, with ≈1 in 5 adults within each of these categories.
- Approximately 13% of US adults meet 5 criteria, 5% meet 6 criteria, and virtually 0% meet 7 criteria at ideal levels.
- Only 17% of US adults have ≥5 metrics with ideal levels, with lower prevalence in males (13%) than in females (21%).

CV Health and Age/Sex

- Presence of ideal cardiovascular health is both age and sex related.
- Younger adults are more likely to meet greater numbers of ideal metrics than are older adults. More than 60% of Americans >60 years of age have ≤2 metrics at ideal levels. At any age, females tend to have more metrics at ideal levels than do males.

Source: NHANES 2013 to 2014.

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CV Health and Race

- Race is also related to presence of ideal cardiovascular health. Blacks and Hispanics tend to have fewer metrics at ideal levels than whites or other races. Approximately 6 in 10 white adults and 7 in 10 black or Hispanic adults have no more than 3 of 7 metrics at ideal levels.

- Among both children and adults, non-Hispanic whites tend to have a higher prevalence of having ≥5 metrics at ideal levels.

- Among children, more non-Hispanic blacks have ≥5 metrics with ideal levels; however, among adults, Hispanics have a higher prevalence than non-Hispanic blacks.

- Approximately 5 in 10 non-Hispanic white children, 4 in 10 non-Hispanic black children, and 3 in 10 Hispanic children have ≥5 metrics at ideal levels.

- By comparison, among adults, only ≈2 in 10 of non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics and 1 in 10 of non-Hispanic blacks have ≥5 metrics at ideal levels.

Prevalence of meeting at least 5 criteria for Ideal CV Health

Source: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES).

For additional information, charts and tables, see Heart Disease & Stroke Statistics - 2017 Update.

Additional charts may be downloaded directly from the online publication at www.heart.org/statistics


If you have questions about statistics or any points made in the 2017 Statistical Update, please contact the American Heart Association National Center, Office of Science & Medicine at statistics@heart.org. Please direct all media inquiries to News Media Relations at http://newsroom.heart.org/newsmedia/contacts.