

Heart Disease and Stroke

CDC works 24/7 to save lives and protect people.

This month's Vital Signs focuses on the number one killer in the U.S.—heart disease and stroke. One out of every three deaths in this country is from cardiovascular disease. As a doctor, I find this number heartbreaking, especially because research clearly shows that we could prevent so many of these deaths. A large proportion of heart attacks and strokes simply don't have to happen. Reducing smoking, controlling blood pressure, managing cholesterol can prolong life for literally millions of people and do so in a way that's healthy and productive.

Doctors should track patient progress on the ABCS of heart health: aspirin when appropriate, blood pressure control, cholesterol management, and smoking cessation. Communities can provide tobacco-free areas, safe places to walk, and access to healthy food options.

Even a single preventable death from heart disease or stroke is one too many. Working together, we can save more than 200,000 lives every year.