

Cardiovascular Health, 2012

More than one in three adults in the United States live with some type of cardiovascular disease. Heart disease and stroke can cause serious illness and disability with associated decreased quality of life and high economic costs. These conditions are, however, among the most preventable health problems. The most common controllable or modifiable risk factors for cardiovascular disease include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, physical inactivity, poor diet, overweight and obesity.¹

The acute myocardial infarction (AMI) mortality rate for Maine is significantly less than in the United States as a whole, while the state's stroke mortality rate is similar to the US rate. Maine's age-adjusted AMI and stroke mortality rates and hospital discharge rates all decreased significantly between 1999 and 2009. The largest decrease was seen for AMI deaths, where the age-adjusted rate was cut almost in half.² Still, heart disease is the leading cause of death among Mainers aged 65 and older and the second leading cause of death among all ages combined. Stroke is the fourth leading cause of death among Mainers.³

Cardiovascular health related measures chosen for the State Health Assessment include:²

- Acute myocardial infarction deaths
- Acute myocardial infarction hospital discharges
- Coronary heart disease deaths
- Stroke deaths
- Stroke hospital discharges
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol



Additional measures related to risk factors for cardiovascular disease can be found in several sections of the State Health Assessment, including Tobacco Use, Substance Abuse and Physical Activity, Nutrition and Weight.

Cardiovascular disease mortality and hospital discharge rates and the prevalence of risk factors vary across population groups in Maine. For example, males are at higher risk than females of dying from AMI or coronary heart disease or being hospitalized for AMI or stroke. Mainers with lower incomes or less education are at higher risk than those with more income or education of ever having been told by a health professional that they had high blood pressure or high cholesterol. The age-adjusted AMI and coronary heart disease mortality rates are significantly higher among Mainers who are American Indian or Alaska Native than those who are White. Aroostook, Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Somerset Counties are at higher risk than the state overall on more cardiovascular health related measures than any other county; their AMI mortality and hospital discharge rates, coronary heart disease mortality rate, and stroke hospital discharge rate are all significantly higher than the state rates.²

Healthy Maine 2020 also has objectives related to cardiovascular health, including:⁴

- Reduce hospitalizations of older adults with heart failure as the principal diagnosis
- Increase the proportion of adults who report having been diagnosed with hypertension who are at a healthy weight
- Increase the proportion of adults who report having been diagnosed with hypertension who report cutting down on salt
- Increase the proportion of adults who report having been diagnosed with hypertension who report engaging in the recommended amount of physical activity
- Increase the proportion of adults who report having been diagnosed with hypertension who report no heavy or binge drinking

Additional objectives related to risk factors for cardiovascular disease can be found in other sections of Healthy Maine 2020, including Substance Abuse and Physical Activity and Nutrition.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. Heart disease and stroke: overview. Available from: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=21> (accessed 5/14/2013).

² Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. State health assessment – 2012. Available from: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/phdata/sha/index.shtml> (accessed 5/14/2013).

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS): leading causes of death. Available from: http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/leading_causes_death.html (accessed 3/19/2013).

⁴ Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthy Maine 2020. Available from: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/healthy-maine/index.shtml>.