



HCHS/SOL Newsletter

Men's Heart Health

Heart disease is the leading cause of death among Hispanics and men. Heart disease refers to heart conditions, including heart attack and coronary artery disease. From 2013 to 2016, almost half of all studied men had high blood pressure, a major risk factor for both heart disease and stroke. Other health conditions and lifestyle choices like diabetes, obesity, an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and excessive alcohol use also increase the risk of developing heart disease.

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends focusing on "**Life's Essential 8**," key measures to improve and maintain heart health. Adopting these practices not only lowers the risk of heart disease and stroke but also enhances overall well-being:

Life's Essential 8



By keeping these eight essential aspects in mind, you can significantly reduce your risk of heart disease and enjoy a healthier, more fulfilling life.

1. **Eat Better:** Keep *whole foods*, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, nuts, seeds, and healthy oils like olive and canola in your diet.
2. **Be More Active:** Aim for 2½ hours of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous *physical activity* weekly for adults.
3. **Quit Tobacco:** Avoid all nicotine products, including cigarettes and e-cigarettes. *Tobacco use is a leading cause of preventable death*, with secondhand smoke affecting 4 out of 10 of U.S. children aged 3-11.
4. **Get Healthy Sleep:** Adults need 7-9 hours of sleep per night. *Quality sleep* promotes healing, brain function, and reduces the risk of chronic diseases.
5. **Manage Weight:** Maintain a *healthy weight*. Aim for a BMI of less than 25. You can calculate your BMI online [Adult BMI Calculator | BMI | CDC](#) or consult a healthcare professional for guidance.
6. **Control Cholesterol:** Monitor your *non-HDL (bad) cholesterol levels*, which can lead to heart disease. Non-HDL is now preferred over total cholesterol and can be measured without fasting.
7. **Manage Blood Sugar:** Keep *blood sugar levels* in check to avoid damage to your heart, kidneys, eyes, and nerves. Monitoring hemoglobin A1c is essential for those with diabetes or prediabetes.
8. **Manage Blood Pressure:** Maintain *blood pressure below 120/80 mm Hg* to stay healthier longer. High blood pressure is defined as readings of 130-139 mm Hg systolic or 80-89 mm Hg diastolic or higher.

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Thanks to your participation in the HCHS/SOL study, investigators have learned that men were generally less likely than women to follow the American Heart Association's (AHA) recommendations. Risk factors were found in 6 out of 10 men and 4 out of 10 women highlighting an important gender gap in cardiovascular disease risk. When studying the health behaviors and conditions of participating men, HCHS/SOL discovered the following statistics:



HCHS/SOL Findings:

- Diet:** Just over 1 out of 100 men followed the AHA's diet score, which includes consuming at least 4.5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily, seven 1-ounce servings of fish weekly, three daily servings of whole grains, limiting sweetened beverages to 4.5 servings per week, and keeping sodium intake below 1,500 mg per day. In contrast, almost 6.5 out of 10 male participants reported having a poor diet.
- Activity:** Over 7 out of 10 men met the recommended levels of physical activity, achieving either 150 minutes of moderate exercise, 75 minutes of vigorous exercise, or a combination of both per week.
- Tobacco:** 7 out of 10 men have either never smoked or quit smoking more than a year ago, though over a quarter of men were current smokers. *Almost 17 out of 100 of men smoked daily. Smoking is related to diabetes in men and psychological distress in both sexes.
- Weight:** Almost 42 out of 100 men classified as overweight (BMI between 25 and 30) and over 36 out of 100 as obese (BMI of 30 or higher). **Cholesterol:** Half of the men had ideal cholesterol levels below 200 mg/dL.
- Blood Sugar:** Almost 6 out of 10 men met the criteria for ideal fasting glucose levels below 100 mg/dL.
- Blood Pressure:** Over 6 out of 10 men had systolic blood pressure greater than 120 mm Hg or diastolic pressure greater than 80 mm Hg or required treatment to control it.



Thank you!

Thank you for your valuable participation in this study and for helping to expand our understanding of Hispanic men's health!

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