



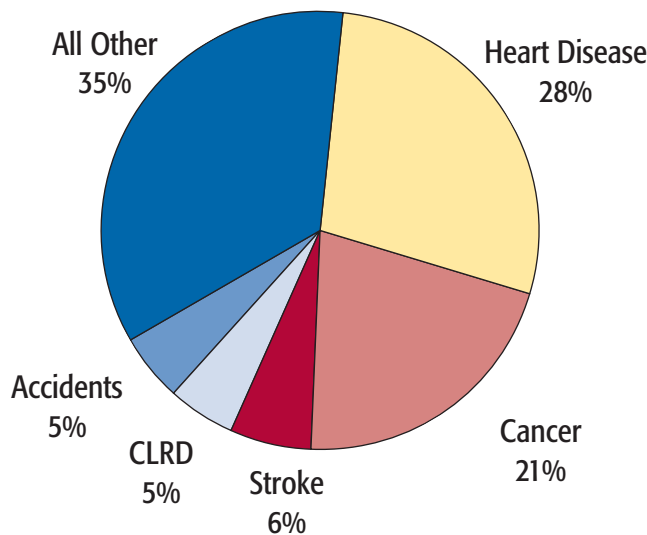
Alabama Vital Stats

Heart Disease Deaths in Alabama - 2003

Heart disease is the number one cause of adult deaths, for both men and women, in the United States and Alabama. This killer is a major contributor to early death and to differences in life expectancy among racial and ethnic groups.¹ In 2003, 13,149 Alabama residents died from heart disease for a crude rate of 292.2 per 100,000 population. Heart disease caused 28.2 percent of all deaths to Alabamians in 2003, more than the deaths caused by cancer and stroke combined (Figure 1).

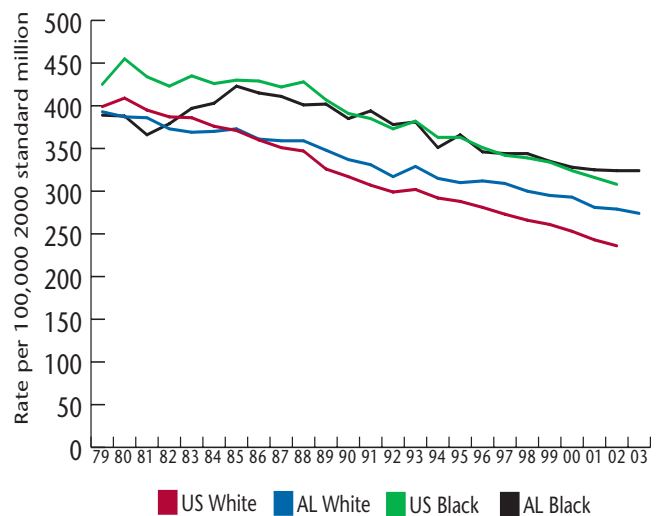
Death rates from heart disease have been declining. Since 1979, the age-adjusted heart disease death rate has decreased, by 40.3 percent in the United States and by 27.6 percent in Alabama. By race, Alabama rates are similar to US rates; however, black rates exceed white rates both in Alabama and nationally. The Alabama white rate was lower than the national white rate from 1979 until 1984, but the Alabama rate has declined at a slower rate and exceeded the US rate by 18.8 percent in 2002 (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Leading Causes of Death Alabama 2003



CLRD: Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease, formerly called COPD

Figure 2. Heart Disease Age-adjusted Death Rates by Race, Alabama and United States, 1979 to 2003



Heart disease includes a variety of conditions that can affect the heart, the most common type being coronary artery disease, or CAD. More than 12 million Americans suffer from CAD. This disease develops when at least one of the coronary arteries that supply blood to the heart becomes narrower than normal, due to a buildup of cholesterol or other substances in the wall of the blood vessel. As CAD progresses, other related conditions may occur, such as angina, heart failure, and heart attack.

Males have higher age-adjusted heart disease death rates than females; and for both males and females, black and other race Alabamians (black and other) have higher rates than whites (Figure 3). In 2003, black and other males in Alabama had the highest age-adjusted death rate for heart disease at 396.9 per 100,000 population, followed by white males with a rate of 333.2. The age-adjusted rate for black and other females was 248.8, followed by white females at 226.5.

Different age groups have different disparity patterns as seen in Figure 4. Comparing black and other females to white females, the largest disparity occurs for women aged 45 to 54. The black and other rate of 144.4 per 100,000 is 138.7 percent higher than the white rate. For males the largest racial disparity is for ages 55 to 64 where the black and other rate exceeds the white rate by 75.3 percent. By ages 75 to 84, no differences in the age-specific rates are seen by race; differences are only by sex with the male rate approximately 49 percent higher than the female rate.

Figure 3. Heart Disease Age-Adjusted Death Rates by Race and Sex, Alabama, 2003

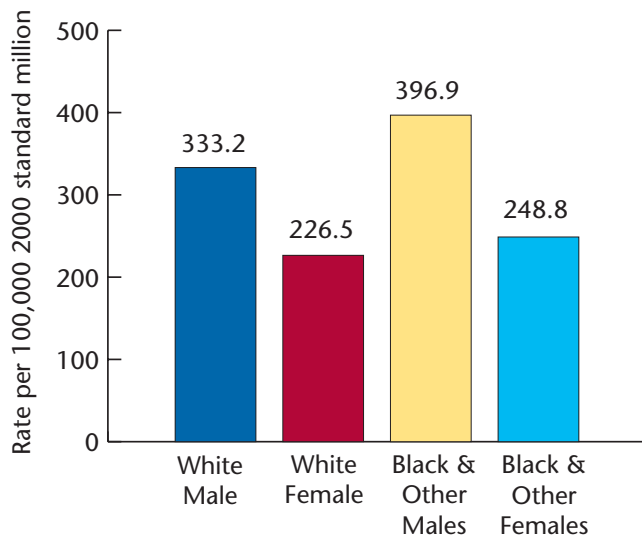
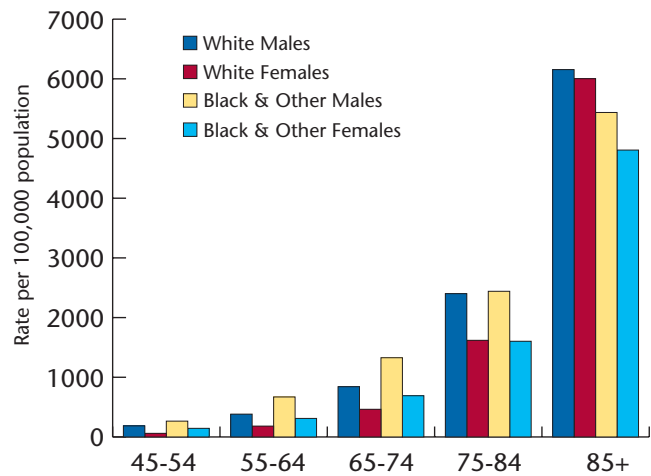


Figure 4. Heart Disease Age-specific Death Rates by Race, Sex, and Age Group, Alabama, 2003



The heart disease burden is expected to increase with the aging of baby boomers and the rising prevalence of obesity and diabetes. Many other risk factors such as smoking, stress, high cholesterol and high blood pressure will continue to worsen the problem.

Individual lifestyle changes including diet and exercise can help prevent heart disease in Alabamians. For example, the Health People 2010 Action Plan calls for people to engage in moderate physical activity (such as walking) for at least 30 minutes a day. In addition, according to U.S. Surgeon General Vice Admiral Richard H. Carmona, reducing the prevalence of smoking is critical to improving the health of Americans. Individual successes in each of these areas, then, will help lead to a heart healthier Alabama.

Common Warning Signs of Heart Attack in MEN:	Common Warning Signs of Heart Attack in WOMEN:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long periods of chest discomfort • Pain in the arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach • Shortness of breath • Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of indigestion or backache • Dizziness • Fatigue and numbness • Shortness of breath • Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness

¹ A public health action plan to prevent heart disease and stroke. http://www.cdc.gov/cvh/action_plan/pdf/action_plan_full.pdf. found February 15, 2005