

HUNGER HEALTH EQUITY



Spotlight on Heart Disease (CVD)



Feeding America is collaborating with the American Heart Association to raise awareness about cardiovascular disease and its connection to food and health equity. Together, we can help people facing hunger get the extra help they need to prevent or manage heart disease.

Cardiovascular disease affects 1 in 4 adults and is the leading cause of adult death in the United States.¹ Commonly referred to as heart disease, it is the buildup of plaque in arteries that leads to heart attacks, strokes and peripheral vascular disease.

These factors increase risks for heart disease:

- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Physical inactivity

Feeding America estimates that 58% of the households it serves include someone living with high blood pressure.²

Diet and nutrition are critical to maintain good health and well-being. However, social, structural and systemic inequities have contributed to higher rates of hunger and heart disease for Black, Latino and Native American individuals.

To overcome these inequities, new approaches are needed to ensure that everyone has access to culturally appropriate healthy food, unbiased health care and essential resources that improve overall health and well-being.

Feeding America's A Closer Look series provides ways you can take action in your community and includes "real-life" stories of progress.

FAST STATS Heart Disease³

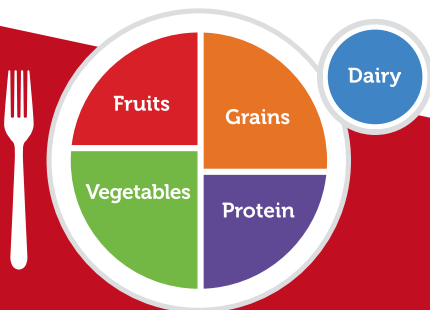
#1 killer of adults in the U.S. today but structural barriers such as reduced access to quality health care and healthy foods may contribute to higher rates of chronic disease in communities of color.

High blood pressure impacts over 100 million people: nearly 1 of every 2 adults, yet high blood pressure among Black Americans is the highest in the world also influenced by historical and structural barriers.

In 2018, Black Americans were 30% more likely to die from heart disease than non-Hispanic whites. One in 2 women of color will die of heart disease.



Life's Simple 7 is defined by the American Heart Association as the 7 risk factors that people can improve through lifestyle changes to help achieve ideal cardiovascular health.



MyPlate.gov

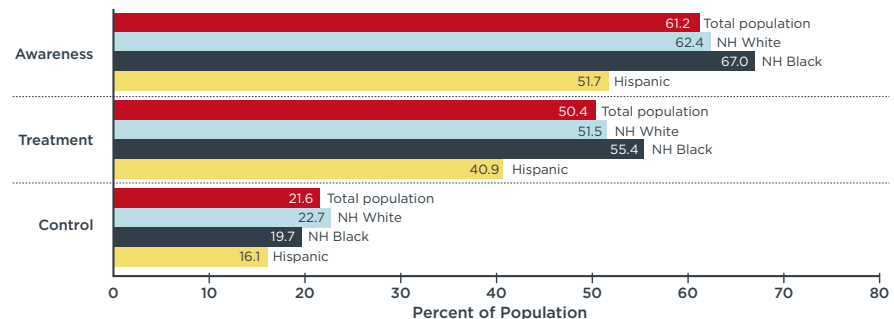
- FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: 1/2 PLATE
- WHOLE GRAINS: 1/4 PLATE
- FISH AND OTHER LEAN PROTEINS: 1/4 PLATE
- LOW FAT OR FAT-FREE DAIRY: 3 CUPS

Diet and Nutrition

A healthy, **well-balanced diet** helps prevent and manage heart disease. Community stakeholders, including food banks, food pantries, non-profits, public health and health care organizations can work together to support individuals in trying to eat healthier.

That is why in 2019 Feeding America partnered with **Healthy Eating Research** to develop strategies and evidence-based nutrition guidelines to improve the nutritional quality of foods distributed through the charitable food sector.

Extent of awareness, treatment, and control of high blood pressure by race/ethnicity, U.S.⁴



Stories from the Field

Friedens Food Pantries and the American Heart Association have a common belief that access to nutritious food is fundamental to health. It has benefits for both today — satisfying hunger — and the future — establishing a foundation for chronic disease prevention and control. Over the past several years, Friedens, a Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin partner, has worked with the AHA to support a variety of efforts that contribute to the overall health and well-being of the community. When the AHA led the charge to create a Fresh Food Access Fund in Milwaukee, Friedens Food Pantries was a key stakeholder in that effort. In spring 2020, Friedens was one of the recipients of that fund, with plans to utilize their allocation to build a community room at one of their locations. That space will be used to educate their neighbors on healthy food and nutrition. It will also allow room for health resources like blood pressure monitoring, providing more opportunity for efforts like the AHA's Check, Change, Control that were previously conducted with support from dietetics students at a local university.



TACKLING FOOD INSECURITY TOGETHER



“Support from the Fresh Food Access Fund is allowing Friedens to go beyond simple emergency food provision by helping us create a safe, welcoming space for community members to learn healthy food habits together, ultimately making a lasting change for health outcomes in Milwaukee.”

— Sophia Torrijos,
Executive Director at Friedens Food Pantries

Take Action! Addressing Heart Disease, Hunger and Equity in Your Community



CONVENE food, hospitality, education, social service, and other community partners to identify and develop solutions to hunger and health barriers within the community.



PRIORITIZE increasing access to affordable food, health care and medication; addressing the social determinants of health; eliminating health disparities; and amplifying community voice.



BUILD TRUST through positive interactions and communication with the community and engage in developing strategies to address unique and complex needs of people facing hunger, eliminating bias, recognizing we are all in this together.



DESIGN culturally appropriate resources; and make accessible in local clinics, grocery stores, food banks and pantries, community centers, schools and places of worship.



ADVOCATE for policy, systems and environmental change approaches that support increased nutritious food access, improved health and well-being for community members in greatest need.

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fast Stats- Heart Disease. 2021. www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/heart-disease.htm

²Hunger in America 2014 | Feeding America. 2014. Retrieved February 3, 2021. www.feedingamerica.org/research/hunger-in-america

³American Heart Association. 2019. Retrieved February 9, 2021 from www.heart.org/en/news/2019/01/31/cardiovascular-diseases-affect-nearly-half-of-american-adults-statistics-show

⁴Chart 1. NHANES 2015-2018. Hypertension defined as systolic blood pressure >130 mmHg or diastolic blood pressure >80 mmHg, or if taking antihypertensive medication. NH = Non-Hispanic. Source unpublished National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Retrieved April 19, 2021 from www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000950.



American Heart Association and Feeding America are proud to collaborate to support a common interest in promoting equitable nutrition access and health equity for all.



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