



What's good for your heart is good for your brain.

A public awareness campaign of the American Heart Association and Alzheimer's Association.



alzheimer's association®

the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

Facts: Brain Health, Heart Health and African-Americans

Every heartbeat pumps about one-fifth of your blood to your brain. Your brain cells need the oxygen and nutrients carried by your blood so you can think clearly, speak and remember.

Conditions that damage the heart and blood vessels, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes, can also interfere with the brain's vital supply lines. We know that African-Americans have a higher risk for these conditions, which may increase their risk of developing heart disease, stroke and Alzheimer's disease.

To address these health threats, for the first time, the Alzheimer's Association and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association have partnered in a new public awareness program to educate African-Americans that by managing their cardiovascular risk, they may also be strengthening their cognitive health.

African-Americans at risk

African-Americans may be at a higher risk for heart disease, stroke and Alzheimer's disease.

- By the year 2030, the number of African-Americans 65 or older is expected to more than double. Increasing age is the greatest risk factor for Alzheimer's, with one in eight people over the age of 65 developing the disease.
- African-Americans are at higher risk* for diabetes, a disease with a strong connection to Alzheimer's, vascular dementia and stroke.
- More than 40 percent of African-Americans have high blood pressure (HBP) and are at risk for stroke — which can lead to a greater risk for developing Alzheimer's.
- Having high cholesterol increases the risk for stroke, and may increase the risk for Alzheimer's.
- African-Americans, as a group, are at a greater risk for heart disease and stroke.

- More than 100,000 African-Americans have a stroke every year.
- African-Americans are twice as likely to have a stroke.*
- African-Americans may have a higher rate of vascular (stroke-related) dementia.*

* Compared to Caucasian Americans

Reducing the risks

African-Americans may have a higher risk for Alzheimer's disease and stroke because of factors that can't be controlled, such as age and family history. However, there are risk factors individuals can control if they take steps to keep their brains healthier as they age.

Watch your numbers

- Blood pressure – desirable blood pressure is less than 120/80
- Blood sugar – desirable fasting blood sugar is less than 100 mg/dL
- Body weight – keep your body weight in the recommended range
- Cholesterol – desirable cholesterol is less than 200 mg/dL

Make healthy lifestyle choices

- Stay mentally active
- Remain socially involved
- Stay physically active
- Reduce your intake of fat and cholesterol
- Don't smoke

For more information

Contact the Alzheimer's Association at www.alz.org/heartbrain or 1.800.272.3900.

Contact the American Stroke Association at www.strokeassociation.org or 1.888.478.7653.