Chronic Diseases in South Carolina

Chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States.¹

6 in 10 Adults in SC have a chronic disease.

4 in 10 Adults in SC have two or more chronic diseases.

$3,500,000,000,000

These chronic conditions account for over 90% of our national healthcare cost or $3.5 trillion in annual health care costs.¹

MAJOR CHRONIC DISEASES IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Seven in 10 leading causes of death in 2020 were due to chronic diseases, totaling 34,650 deaths or 56.6% of all South Carolina deaths.²

73.2% of Medicare-enrolled persons aged 65 years and older have 2 or more chronic diseases.³

Heart Disease and Stroke

Heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases were the leading causes of death and caused 15,152 deaths in South Carolina or 25% of all deaths.²

Heart disease accounted for 5,291 premature deaths in 2020.² Premature deaths are deaths that occur before a person reaches the expected age of 75 years.

Heart disease accounted for 75,886 hospitalizations in South Carolina, with total hospitalization charges of more than $6.8 billion.⁴

Cancer

Cancer accounted for 10,793 deaths in 2020.²

Cancer accounted for 6,393 premature deaths.²

Over 3,000 cancers each year are related to obesity.

Diabetes

In 2020, South Carolina had the 6th highest percent of adult population with diabetes in the United States.⁶

Non-Hispanic Black adults ages 45 years and older had two times higher death rate compared to non-Hispanic Whites.²

Diabetes accounted for 1,182 premature deaths in 2020.²
RISK FACTORS

Modifying three risk factors – **poor diet, lack of physical activity, and smoking** – can prevent 80% of heart disease and stroke, 80% of type 2 diabetes, and 40% of cancer.  

**KEY LIFESTYLE RISKS FOR CHRONIC DISEASE**

**Poor Nutrition**
- 12.5% of high school students did not eat fruit during the 7 days before the survey.  
- 12.1% of high school students did not eat vegetables.  
- 43.2% of adults eat less than one serving of fruit per day.  
- 18.7% of adults eat less than one serving of vegetables per day.

**Lack of Physical Activity**
- Only 19.5% of high school students met the physical activity recommendation of being active for at least 60 minutes every day during the 7 days before the survey.  
- 26.6% of adults are physically inactive.  
- Only 23.0% of South Carolina adults met the recommended amount of both aerobic and muscle strengthening activity.

**Tobacco Use**
- 5.9% of high school students are current cigarette smokers.  
- 22.1% of high school students use e-cigarettes.  
- 18.1% of adults are current smokers.

**Excessive Alcohol Use**
- 9.2% of high school students reported current binge drinking.  
- 15.7% of adults reported binge drinking.

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**Prevalence of Two or More Chronic Diseases**

Prevalence (%)
- 25.8%-34.2%
- 34.3%-36.9%
- 37.0%-40.3%
- 40.4%-49.0%

Source: SC BRFSS, 2019-2019  
Notes: Adults 18+, chronic diseases include Asthma, Coronary Heart Disease, Diabetes, Arthritis, COPD, Depression, Stroke.

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3. CDC Leading Indicators for Chronic Diseases and Risk Factors [https://www.cdc.gov/cdi/](https://www.cdc.gov/cdi/)  
5. SC DHEC Central Cancer Registry  
6. SC DHEC BRFSS.  
7. CDC, NCCDPHP, About Chronic Disease [https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/index.htm)  
9. SC DHEC YTS, 2019