

# Heart Disease Fact Sheet

Heart disease and stroke are the number one killers in South Africa. One in three men and one in four women will suffer from cardiovascular disease (affecting the heart and the rest of the blood vessels) before they are 60 years old. *Health24.com*

## Global Burden of Heart disease:

Heart disease affects people across the globe and does not discriminate against race, age and/or gender. As reported in a recent article, the incidence of heart disease is growing amongst teenagers and young adults. Contracting this disease is directly related to lifestyle, therefore, heart disease and stroke are more prevalent in countries such as America. Having said this, South Africa is not exempt from this problem and upon consulting the numbers, it is clear that this disease rates as the most prominent killer in our country.

## The 'Heart Disease in South Africa' report commissioned by The Heart and Stroke Foundation SA (HSFSA) revealed the following:

- Between 1997 and 2004 in South Africa, 195 people a day died due to some form of heart and blood vessel disease (cardiovascular disease).
- About 33 people a day die due to heart attacks.
- Two men die for every woman who dies of a heart attack.
- About 37 people a day die due to heart failure.
- Despite the high rates of AIDS deaths in South Africa actuarial projections suggest that chronic disease, including heart disease is also going to increase by 2010.
- More than half the deaths due to chronic disease, including heart disease, occur before the age of 65 years. These are premature deaths that affect the workforce in the country and have a major impact on the economy of that country.
- Premature deaths due to heart and blood vessel diseases in people of working age (35 – 64 years) are expected to increase by 41% between 2007 and 2030. The negative economic impact of this will be enormous.
- The highest rates of heart and blood vessel disease in South Africa are found in the Indian community, followed by the coloured community with the white and black community having the lowest and most similar rates.
- Although the white and black population has similar rates of disease the pattern differs dramatically. The white population predominantly has a pattern of deaths due to heart attacks, while the black population predominantly has a pattern of deaths due to stroke, heart muscle disease and heart disease due to high blood pressure.

## Key Risk Factors:

Nine out of 10 heart disease patients have at least one risk factor. Several medical conditions and lifestyle choices can put people at a higher risk for heart disease, including:

- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Cigarette smoking
- Being overweight or obese
- Poor diet
- Physical inactivity
- Alcohol use

## It is predicted that by 2020 the top five causes of death and disease are predicted to be:

- Heart disease;
- Major depression;
- Road traffic accidents;
- Stroke;
- Chronic chest diseases

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## Can heart disease and stroke be prevented?

According to a Professor of Cardiology and Internal Medicine at the University of Cape Town, up to 80% of heart disease and stroke could be prevented by setting up healthy habits for life with a good diet, exercise and avoiding smoking.

### Other preventative measures\* include:

- Eat smaller, more regular meals
- When shopping look out for products with the Heart Mark logo as they are lower in saturated fats, cholesterol, salt and sugar.
- Include five servings of fruit and vegetables each day
- Try to eat fatty fish twice a week.
- Limit your intake of red meat to 2-3 times a week.
- Eat fats sparingly
- Drink alcohol in moderation.
- Regular physical activity
- Manage stress levels

## Protect yourself against the possibility of contracting a dread disease

Liberty Corporate's dread disease offering provides protection for you and your staff against heart disease, stroke and many other dread diseases. For more information on what we can do for you, contact your accredited Liberty Wealth Adviser, Corporate Specialist, Client Service Consultant or call our Client Support Centre on (011) 408 2999.

### Reference:

\*[www.heartfoundation.co.za](http://www.heartfoundation.co.za). Yvonne Fontyn. Sept 2010. Give your heart a chance. Financial Mail. Pg1  
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