



National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP)

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Health and Economic Costs of Chronic Diseases

90% of the nation's \$4.1 trillion in annual health care expenditures are for people with chronic and mental health conditions.^{1,2}



Chronic diseases have significant health and economic costs in the United States. Interventions to prevent and manage these diseases have significant [health and economic benefits](#).

Diseases

Heart Disease and Stroke



Nothing kills more Americans than [heart disease](#) and [stroke](#). More than 877,500 Americans die of heart disease or stroke every year—that's one-third of all deaths. These diseases take an economic toll, as well, costing our health care system \$216 billion per year and causing \$147 billion in lost productivity on the job.³

See the [health and economic benefits of high blood pressure interventions](#).

Cancer



Each year in the United States, more than [1.7 million people](#) are diagnosed with [cancer](#), and almost 600,000 die from it, making it the second leading cause of death. The cost of cancer care continues to rise and is expected to reach more than \$240 billion by 2030.⁴

See the health and economic benefits of interventions for [breast cancer](#), [cervical cancer](#), [colorectal cancer](#), and [skin cancer](#).

Diabetes



More than 37 million Americans have [diabetes](#), and another 96 million adults in the United States have a condition called prediabetes, which puts them at risk for type 2 diabetes. Diabetes can cause serious complications, including heart disease, kidney failure, and blindness. In 2017, the total estimated cost of diagnosed diabetes was \$327 billion in medical costs and lost productivity.⁵

See the [health and economic benefits of diabetes interventions](#).

Obesity



[Obesity](#) affects 20% of children and 42% of adults, putting them at risk of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. Over 25% of young people 17 to 24 are too heavy to join the US military. Obesity costs the US health care system nearly \$173 billion a year.⁶

Arthritis



[Arthritis](#) affects 58.5 million adults in the United States, which is about 1 in 4 adults. It is a leading cause of work disability in the United States, one of the most common chronic conditions, and a common cause of chronic pain. The total cost attributable to arthritis and related conditions was about \$303.5 billion in 2013. Of this amount, nearly \$140 billion was for medical costs and \$164 billion was for indirect costs associated with lost earnings.⁷

Alzheimer's Disease



[Alzheimer's disease](#), a type of dementia, is an irreversible, progressive brain disease that affects about 5.7 million Americans, including 1 in 10 adults aged 65 and older. It is the sixth leading cause of death among all adults and the fifth leading cause for those aged 65 or older. In 2020, the estimated cost of caring for and treating people with Alzheimer's disease was \$305 billion. By 2050, these costs are projected to be more than \$1.1 trillion.⁸

Epilepsy



In the United States, about 3 million adults and 470,000 children and teens younger than 18 have active [epilepsy](#)—meaning that they have been diagnosed by a doctor, had a recent seizure, or both. Adults with epilepsy report worse mental health, more cognitive impairment, and barriers in social participation compared to adults without epilepsy. In 2016, health care spending for epilepsy was \$8.6 billion in direct costs.⁹

Tooth Decay



[Cavities](#) (also called tooth decay) are one of the most common chronic diseases in the United States. One in six children aged 6 to 11 years and one in four adults have untreated cavities. Untreated cavities can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems eating, speaking, and learning. On average, 34 million school hours are lost each year because of unplanned (emergency) dental care, and over \$45 billion is lost in productivity due to dental disease.^{10,11}

See the [health and economic benefits of oral health interventions](#).

Risk Factors

Cigarette Smoking



Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States. More than 16 million Americans have at least one disease caused by smoking. This amounts to more than \$240 billion in health care spending that could be reduced every year if we could prevent youth from starting to smoke and help every person who smokes quit.¹²

See the [health and economic benefits of tobacco use interventions](#).

Physical Inactivity







Not getting enough physical activity comes with high health and financial costs. It can lead to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, and obesity. Physical inactivity also costs the nation \$117 billion a year for related health care.¹³









Excessive Alcohol Use



Excessive alcohol use is responsible for 140,000 deaths in the United States each year, including 1 in 10 deaths among working-age adults.^{14,15} In 2010, excessive alcohol use cost the US economy \$249 billion, or \$2.05 a drink, and \$2 of every \$5 of these costs were paid by the public.¹⁶ Binge drinking is responsible for over 40% the deaths and three-quarters of the costs due to excessive alcohol use.^{14,16}

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