

# Chronic Diseases in South Carolina



SOUTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH

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



**6 in 10**

Adults in SC have a **chronic disease**.



**1 in 3**

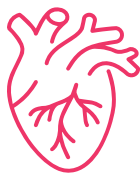
Adults in SC have **two or more chronic diseases**.

**\$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.<sup>1</sup>

## MAJOR CHRONIC DISEASES IN SOUTH CAROLINA

**Eight in 10** leading causes of death in 2023 were due to chronic diseases, totaling **35,039 deaths** or 60.4% of all South Carolina deaths.<sup>2</sup>



### Heart Disease and Stroke

Heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases were the leading causes of death and caused **16,107 deaths** in South Carolina or 27.8% of all deaths.<sup>2</sup>

Heart disease accounted for **5,443 premature deaths** in 2023.<sup>2</sup> Premature deaths are deaths that occur before a person reaches the expected age of 75 years.

Heart disease accounted for **59,399 hospitalizations** in South Carolina, with total hospitalization charges of more than **\$5.9 billion**.<sup>3</sup>

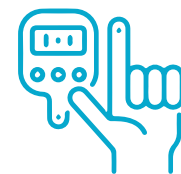


### Cancer

Cancer was the second leading cause of death in 2023 and accounted for **11,159 deaths**.<sup>2</sup>

Cancer accounted for **6,313 premature deaths**.<sup>2</sup>

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



### Diabetes

In 2023, South Carolina had the **5th highest percent** of adult population with diabetes in the United States.<sup>5</sup>

Non-Hispanic Black adults ages 45 years and older had more than **two times** higher death rate compared to non-Hispanic Whites.<sup>2</sup>

Diabetes accounted for **965 premature deaths** in 2023.<sup>2</sup>

# RISK FACTORS

80% of premature deaths from heart disease and stroke could be avoided by controlling the main risk factors: **tobacco, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity.**<sup>6</sup>

## KEY LIFESTYLE RISKS FOR CHRONIC DISEASE<sup>5</sup>

### Poor Nutrition

- **10.5% of high school students** did not eat fruit during the 7 days before the survey.<sup>7</sup>
- **12.2% of high school students** did not eat vegetables.<sup>7</sup>
- **42.0% of adults** eat less than one serving of fruit per day.<sup>7</sup>
- **20.3% of adults** eat less than one serving of vegetables per day.<sup>5</sup>



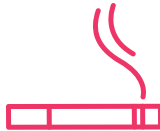
### Lack of Physical Activity

- Only **24.0% 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.<sup>7</sup>
- **26.3% of adults** are physically inactive.<sup>5</sup>
- Only **31.6% of South Carolina adults** met the recommended amount of both aerobic and muscle strengthening activity.<sup>5</sup>



### Tobacco Use

- **1.5% of high school students** are current cigarette smokers.<sup>8</sup>
- **9.1% of high school students** use e-cigarettes.<sup>8</sup>
- **12.1% of adults** are current smokers.<sup>5</sup>

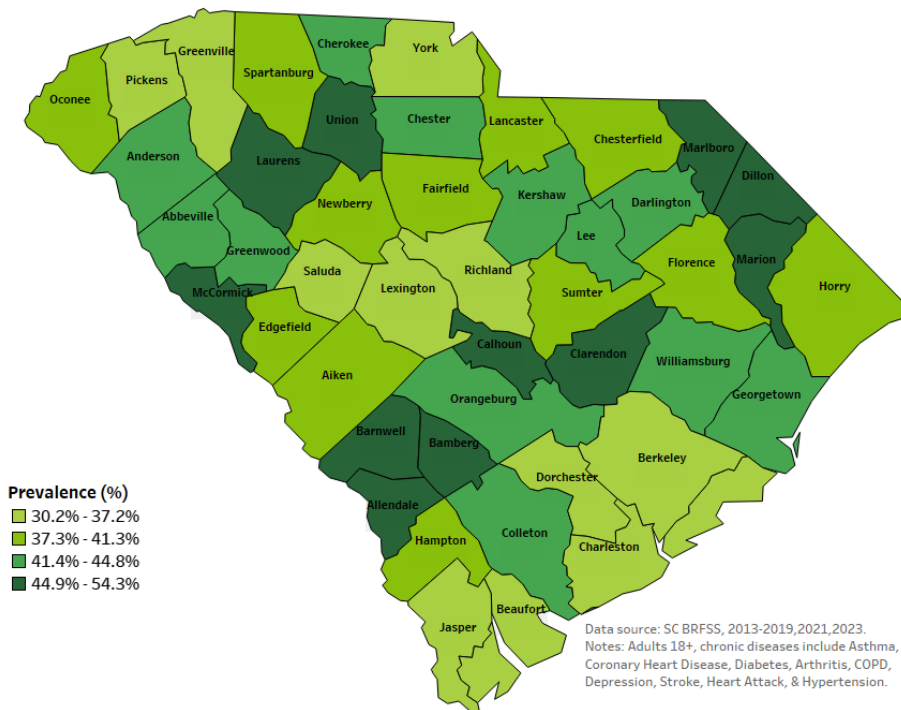


### Excessive Alcohol Use

- **9.3% of high school students** reported current binge drinking.<sup>7</sup>
- **14.5% of adults** reported binge drinking.<sup>5</sup>



Prevalence of Two or More Chronic Diseases



Produced by Epidemiology, Analytics & Data Visualization Section, August 2025

1. Chronic Disease Prevention: The Key to Improving Life and Healthcare, a white paper prepared by NACDD, 2020.

2. SC DPH Vital Statistics, 2023.

3. SC Office of RFA Hospital Discharge, 2023.

4. SC Central Cancer Registry

5. SC BRFS.

6. WHO Cardiovascular Diseases [https://www.who.int/europe/health-topics/cancer/cardiovascular-diseases#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/europe/health-topics/cancer/cardiovascular-diseases#tab=tab_1)

7. SC YRBSS, 2021.

8. SC YTS, 2024.