



# BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH



[goredforwomen.org/pregnancy](http://goredforwomen.org/pregnancy)

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of maternal death in the U.S., or more simply put, heart disease is the No. 1 killer of new moms.<sup>1</sup>



It can pose a threat to women's heart health during pregnancy and later in life, making it important that women understand how to care for themselves and their baby.



Black women face a greater risk of developing high blood pressure, having a stroke or developing complications during or immediately after pregnancy.<sup>2</sup>



Pregnancy-related deaths in the US have risen 140% over the last three decades – cardiovascular disease continues to be the leading cause.<sup>3</sup>

The American Heart Association and Go Red for Women are doing something about this crisis.

### Health Equity Research Network on Disparities in Maternal-Infant Health

**Outcomes:** Seeking to understand the factors disproportionately affecting pregnancy complications and deaths among Black women.



**Empowered to Serve Maternal Health Modules:** Driving change through local community solutions to meet the unique needs of Black mothers.



**Postpartum Medicaid Extension:** Advocating to pass more coverage to help low-income mothers have better access to care.



**Go Red for Women Real Women Class of Survivors:** Raising awareness through the real stories of women who faced cardiovascular disease during pregnancy.



**Research Goes Red:** Allocating grants to help close the gender and race gaps in cardiovascular disease research.

We know that many women not only want to be great moms but want to be moms for a very long time. **Go Red for Women** is here to help every step of the way.

## Fast Facts

Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women are two to three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications.<sup>4</sup>



Black women are more likely to develop pregnancy-related heart problems than other women.

- **Black women face a risk of dying during or soon after pregnancy that's 2.5 times greater** than white women and **three times greater** than Hispanic women.<sup>5</sup>
- **Even after adjusting for socioeconomic status**, access to health care and other medical conditions, researchers found that compared to white women, **pregnant Black women were:**

**45%**  
more likely to die  
in the hospital

**23%**  
more likely to  
have a heart attack

**57%**  
more likely to  
have a stroke

**42%**  
more likely to  
develop a blood  
clot in the lungs

**71%**  
more likely to  
develop heart  
muscle weakness<sup>6</sup>

- **Preeclampsia**, a serious complication of pregnancy characterized by **high blood pressure and kidney dysfunction**, is **60% more common in Black women** and is a **risk factor for cardiovascular disease**.<sup>7</sup>

### Questions to ask your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant

- ✓ Am I at risk for cardiovascular health issues during my pregnancy? If so, how can I reduce my risk?
- ✓ How can my blood pressure levels impact my pregnancy and how can I best manage them?
- ✓ How can I keep myself and my baby healthy during my pregnancy and in the critical weeks after giving birth?
- ✓ I have a family history of heart disease or stroke. How can this impact my prenatal and postpartum health as well as the long-term health of my child?
- ✓ How can I support my emotional well-being and reduce my stress during my pregnancy?

<sup>1</sup>Petersen EE, Davis NL, Goodman D, et al. Vital Signs: Pregnancy-Related Deaths, United States, 2011–2015, and Strategies for Prevention, 13 States, 2013–2017. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2019;68:423–429. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6818e1>

<sup>2</sup>Petersen EE, Davis NL, Goodman D, et al. Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Pregnancy-Related Deaths — United States, 2007–2016. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2019;68:762–765. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6835a3>

<sup>3</sup>Poorly Understood Maternal Risks of Pregnancy in Women With Heart Disease <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/full/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.117.031889>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/pdfs/mm6835a3-H.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>[https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000950?utm\\_campaign=ahajournals&utm\\_source=heart&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_content=statshome](https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000950?utm_campaign=ahajournals&utm_source=heart&utm_medium=link&utm_content=statshome) Page 187 – Complications: Maternal Mortality and CVD

<sup>6</sup><https://newsroom.heart.org/news/black-women-have-the-highest-risk-of-pregnancy-related-heart-problems-in-the-us>

<sup>7</sup><https://newsroom.heart.org/news/u-s-born-black-women-at-higher-risk-of-preeclampsia-than-black-immigrants#:~:text=Preeclampsia%2C%20a%20serious%20complication%20of,risk%20factor%20for%20cardiovascular%20disease>