



MATERNAL DEATH IN THE U.S.

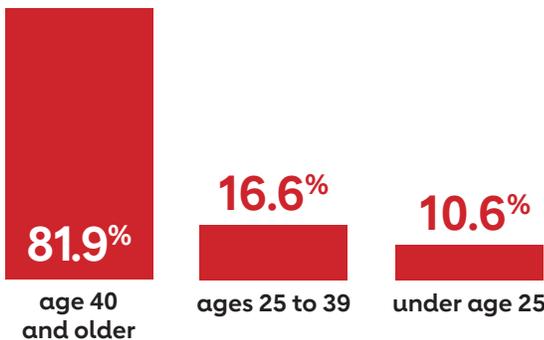
Cardiovascular conditions are the leading cause of death during and shortly after pregnancy. Almost two-thirds of these deaths could be prevented, experts say.

Pregnancy-related death: The death of a woman while pregnant, or within a year of pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management. [The Center for Disease Control and Prevention]

4 KEY RISK FACTORS

1. AGE

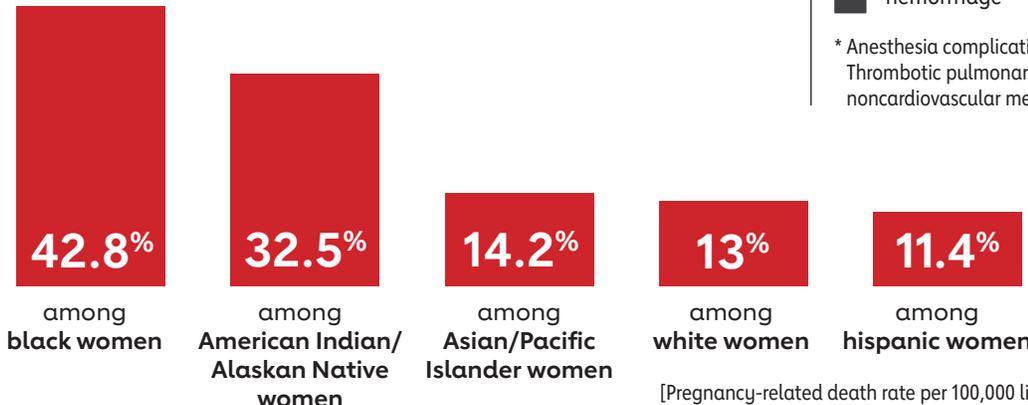
increases risk of pregnancy-related death.



[Pregnancy-related death rate in women per 100,000 live births in 2018.]

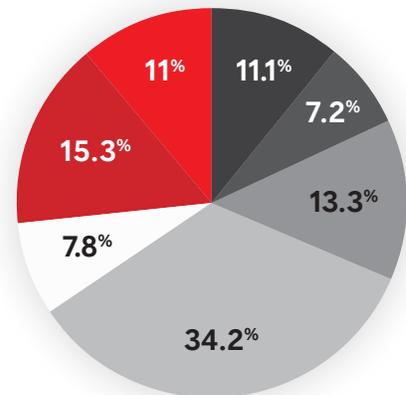
2. RACE AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES in pregnancy-related mortality are significant, peaking among black women.

Differences in the quality of pregnancy care and in outcomes have been linked to factors such as race, ethnicity, geography and income. Systems in place that promote racial inequities can limit access to care and amplify pregnancy risks.



[Pregnancy-related death rate per 100,000 live births in 2018.]

Causes of Pregnancy Related Deaths



Many women who have cardiac problems during pregnancy were not previously diagnosed with heart disease.

- other or unknown causes*
- other cardiovascular conditions
- infection
- hemorrhage
- cardiomyopathy
- high blood pressure disorders
- stroke

* Anesthesia complications; Amniotic fluid embolism; Thrombotic pulmonary or other embolism; Other noncardiovascular medical conditions; Unknown

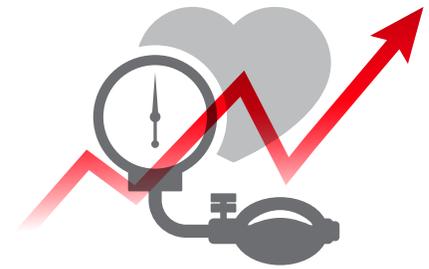
3. HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

(or hypertension) rates during pregnancy have increased substantially among women hospitalized for delivery in the U.S. since 1993.

Hypertension on the rise. Rates of chronic hypertension — having high blood pressure even before pregnancy — have also increased.

The dangers:

Hypertensive disorders in pregnancy include **preeclampsia** and **eclampsia** and can make it harder for a fetus to get enough oxygen and nutrients to grow, increasing the risk of an early delivery.



Preeclampsia: high blood pressure with signs of problems in organs such as the kidneys and liver

Eclampsia: preeclampsia plus new onset of seizures

4. OBESITY

is a major risk factor and could account for nearly one-third of a steep increase in U.S. pregnancy-related deaths.

Obesity before pregnancy. From 2011 to 2015, pre-pregnancy obesity increased 8%, with the most severe obesity increasing 14%. [CDC study of pregnancies in 48 states and the District of Columbia shows.]

Maternal mortality increases with BMI. Pregnant women with a BMI at or above 30 faced 3.7 times the risk of pregnancy-related death than other women. [Study of Michigan cases in 2004-06 found.]



Severe obesity: body mass index of 40 or higher



CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE accounts for more than one-fourth of maternal mortality in the U.S.

Women should learn the risk factors and talk to their health care teams about their personal risks before, during and after pregnancy.

Read more about how the American Heart Association is improving women's health through education, research and advocacy.

[GoRedForWomen.org/pregnancy](https://www.GoRedForWomen.org/pregnancy)