



Chronic Disease Frequently Asked Questions

What is chronic disease?

- Chronic diseases are long-lasting illnesses such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes or depression. Because there can be asymptomatic cases, they can go undiagnosed for an extended period of time. If left untreated, they may lead to much more serious conditions, such as heart disease, stroke, kidney failure and even blindness.

How many people are affected by chronic disease?

- Nearly half (45%) of all Americans – 133 million people – suffer from at least one chronic disease.
- The number of Americans with chronic conditions is expected to rise at alarmingly high rates over the next decade – between one-and-a-half and three times faster than the population as a whole.

Why is it important to focus on preventing chronic disease?

- Chronic diseases can be debilitating and costly. Treating patients with chronic disease accounts for 75 cents of every dollar spent on healthcare, adding up to more than \$1.7 trillion per year. In addition to the cost of treatment, the U.S. economy loses more than \$1 trillion annually in lost productivity (missing work due to illness, lower productivity at work due to illness, etc.) due to the seven most common chronic diseases.
- The vast majority of chronic diseases can be prevented or better managed. The CDC estimates that 80% of heart disease and stroke, 80% of type 2 diabetes, and 40% of cancer could be prevented if Americans would restrain from smoking, maintain a healthy diet, and exercise more.
- Preventive services, such as regular health exams and screening for chronic conditions, can also help to diagnose and control chronic diseases early, keeping them from developing into much more severe, and costly, conditions. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

What role do medicines play in the prevention and treatment of chronic disease?

- In addition to lifestyle changes, prescription medicines are powerful tools in the prevention and treatment of chronic disease. For example, a patient who is unable to control his high cholesterol and/or high blood pressure with lifestyle changes alone, may be able to control his levels by taking medicine. Managing this condition, in turn, could help prevent a heart attack or stroke.
- Prevention of major medical events, such as heart attack or stroke, not only saves lives, it saves money. Increased patient adherence used to treat diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol yields between \$4 and \$7 of savings in other health care costs for every additional dollar spent on medicines, showing the value of better adherence.



Saving lives is our job.

- The effectiveness of a treatment regimen depends on largely on adherence to the medicines. The better a patient complies with the treatment program, the better their health outcomes and the fewer preventable costs incurred. Adherence to medicine is essential to controlling spending, especially for the chronically ill.

What are America's biopharmaceutical companies doing to fight chronic disease?

- America's biopharmaceutical companies are committed to fighting chronic disease in many ways. We believe that paying for medicine should not cause people to forgo needed treatment. Therefore, we support programs that expand access to preventive services and medicines for all Americans.
 - The Partnership for Prescription Assistance program (www.pparx.org) helps the uninsured and underinsured access private and public discount drug programs.
 - The Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease (www.fightchronicdisease.org) educates the public about chronic disease, mobilizing Americans to call for change and calling on policymakers to enact policies to fight chronic disease.
 - The Council for American Medical Innovation (www.americanmedicalinnovation.org) drives a national policy agenda on medical innovation which will ultimately help prevent and better treat chronic illnesses and life-threatening diseases.
 - The Medicare Rx Education Network educates seniors on the options available to them through Medicare prescription drug coverage.
 - The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) supports coverage for uninsured children.
- We are also committed to finding new treatments for chronic conditions. Advances in medical innovation have resulted in a longer and better quality of life for Americans. Our ability to effectively prevent and manage chronic disease depends on continued innovation and policies that support and encourage it.
- We support policies that encourage future opportunities to innovate and fight chronic disease, including strong protection of intellectual property and promotion of a business environment encourages risk-taking and rewards investment in research.

America's biopharmaceutical companies support health care reform that expands access to high-quality, affordable health insurance for all Americans, preserves patient and provider choices, fights chronic disease and advances medical innovation for the benefit of our nation's health and economy.