



Chronic diseases and health promotion

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Chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes, are by far the leading cause of mortality in the world, representing 60% of all deaths. Out of the 35 million people who died from chronic disease in 2005, half were under 70 and half were women.



WHO/Marko Kokic

This invisible epidemic is an under-appreciated cause of poverty and hinders the economic development of many countries. Contrary to common perception, 80% of chronic disease deaths occur in low and middle income countries.

Fact File

Increasing levels of physical activity bring health benefits across age groups.



[Read the fact file](#)

Video

Learn about misunderstandings surrounding chronic disease.



[See the video](#)

What we do

Promote

Promote healthy living (better diet, more physical activity and tobacco cessation) and healthy societies, especially for the poor and those living in disadvantaged populations.

Prevent

Prevent premature deaths and avoid unnecessary disability due to chronic diseases. The solutions exist now, and many are simple, cheap and cost effective.

Treat

Treat chronic diseases effectively, using latest available knowledge. Make treatment available to all, especially those in the poorest settings.

Care

Help provide appropriate care by facilitating equitable and good quality health care for major chronic diseases.

Chronic disease publications

Global status report on noncommunicable diseases 2010



2008-2013 Action Plan for the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases



A practical toolkit for successful advocacy



More publications

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[Find out more about the Department and its core functions](#)

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