

Cancer incidence in Canada, 2010

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About 170,000 new cases of cancer were diagnosed in Canada in 2010, which translates to an incidence rate of almost 500 cases per 100,000 people. Although this is an 11.1% increase compared with a decade earlier, the age-standardized incidence rate, which controls for aging in the population, has actually decreased by 3.4% to 391.1 cancers per 100,000 people.

In 2010, the five most commonly diagnosed cancers continued to be lung (13.7% of all new cases), breast (13.5%), prostate (12.9%), colorectal (12.4%) and bladder (4.2%). These five cancers combined account for over half of all new cancers. The most commonly diagnosed cancers among males were prostate (25.3% of new cases), lung (14.2%), colorectal (13.1%), bladder (6.3%) and non-Hodgkin lymphoma (4.3%). Among females the list included breast (27.3%), lung (13.1%), colorectal (11.6%), uterine (6.1%) and thyroid (4.7%).

The top five cancers remained the same for both sexes combined and males between 2000 and 2010. However, for females, lung cancer moved from third to second place past colorectal cancer, and thyroid cancer moved from ninth place in 2000 to fifth place in 2010.

In 2010, cancer was more likely to be diagnosed in males (incidence rate of 514.6 per 100,000 people) than females (483.1 per 100,000 people). Since 2000, the age-standardized incidence rate for all cancers combined has decreased by 9.2% among males but increased by 2.0% among females.

Table 1
Rank, number of new cancers and percentage of all cancers for the top five cancers by sex, Canada

	2000			2010		
	rank	number	%	rank	number	%
Both sexes						
All cancers combined	...	137,700	100.0	...	169,580	100.0
Lung and bronchus	1	20,030	14.5	1	23,175	13.7
Breast	2	18,890	13.7	2	22,835	13.5
Prostate	3	18,620	13.5	3	21,930	12.9
Colon and rectum	4	18,110	13.2	4	20,955	12.4
Urinary bladder (including in situ)	5	5,700	4.1	5	7,195	4.2
Males						
All cancers combined	...	71,800	100.0	...	86,695	100.0
Prostate	1	18,620	25.9	1	21,930	25.3
Lung and bronchus	2	11,640	16.2	2	12,325	14.2
Colon and rectum	3	9,675	13.5	3	11,330	13.1
Urinary bladder (including in situ)	4	4,270	5.9	4	5,445	6.3
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	5	2,910	4.1	5	3,740	4.3
Females						
All cancers combined	...	65,900	100.0	...	82,885	100.0
Breast	1	18,765	28.5	1	22,625	27.3
Lung and bronchus	3	8,395	12.7	2	10,850	13.1
Colon and rectum	2	8,430	12.8	3	9,625	11.6
Corpus uteri	4	3,440	5.2	4	5,045	6.1
Thyroid	9	1,690	2.6	5	3,870	4.7
Other, ill-defined and unknown sites	5	2,740	4.2	6	3,275	4.0

... not applicable

Table 2
Rank, incidence rate and age-standardized incidence rate for the top five cancers by sex, Canada

	2000			2010		
	rank	incidence rate	age-standardized incidence rate ¹	rank	incidence rate	age-standardized incidence rate ¹
Both sexes						
All cancers combined	...	448.7	404.8	...	498.7	391.1
Lung and bronchus	1	65.3	58.9	1	68.2	52.6
Breast	2	61.6	54.4	2	67.2	52.5
Prostate	3	60.7	55.6	3	64.5	49.9
Colon and rectum	4	59.0	52.6	4	61.6	47.1
Urinary bladder (including in situ)	5	18.6	16.6	5	21.2	16.1
Males						
All cancers combined	...	472.6	476.1	...	514.6	432.5
Prostate	1	122.5	125.0	1	130.2	107.1
Lung and bronchus	2	76.6	77.1	2	73.2	61.6
Colon and rectum	3	63.7	64.3	3	67.2	56.3
Urinary bladder (including in situ)	4	28.1	28.8	4	32.3	27.3
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	5	19.2	18.7	5	22.2	18.9
Females						
All cancers combined	...	425.4	355.2	...	483.1	362.2
Breast	1	121.1	102.0	1	131.9	100.0
Lung and bronchus	3	54.2	45.2	2	63.2	45.8
Colon and rectum	2	54.4	43.1	3	56.1	39.3
Corpus uteri	4	22.2	18.8	4	29.4	21.8
Thyroid	9	10.9	10.4	5	22.6	20.4
Other, ill-defined and unknown sites	5	17.7	13.6	6	19.1	12.9

... not applicable

1. Age-standardized to the 1991 Canadian population.

Note(s): All rates are per 100,000 people.

Note to readers

Incidence refers to the number of newly diagnosed cases of cancer.

Since cancer is more likely to occur in older people, the age structure of a population will have a strong influence on the cancer incidence rates observed. To allow more valid comparisons over time, age-standardized rates are used to control for differences in population age-structure. The age-standardized rate is the rate that would occur if the population of interest had the same age-structure as the standard population. The current standard population used here is the July 1, 1991 Canadian population.

Ontario and Quebec data do not currently include death certificate only (DCO) cases for cancers diagnosed in 2010. A DCO case occurs when a cancer is discovered through the cause of death information on a death certificate, as opposed to through a cancer report from the medical system. Quebec reported just under 1,400 DCO cases in 2009, and Ontario reported just over 1,000 DCO cases in 2007 (the most recent year that Ontario DCO cases are available).

Available in CANSIM: tables 103-0550 and 103-0553.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3207.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca).