

Deaths, 2024

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Tuesday, January 13, 2026

According to the preliminary data from the Canadian Vital Statistics - Death database released today, there were 326,779 deaths in Canada in 2024, a slight decrease (-0.2%) compared with 2023 (327,546 deaths). Furthermore, the new and updated data show that mortality rates decreased for all age groups in 2024 in comparison with 2023 and, in general, for both males and females.

With some exceptions, 2024 is the second straight year of improvement across age groups and sexes, after mortality rates reached recent peaks in 2021 and 2022, when Canada and the world were experiencing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of these decreases in mortality is seen in other indicators of population health, including life expectancy and leading causes of death.

Life expectancy continues to increase across Canada

Life expectancy at birth in Canada increased for the second consecutive year in 2024, representing, in some regions, a full rebound from the decline induced by the pandemic. At the national level, life expectancy at birth increased from 81.68 years in 2023 to 82.16 years in 2024, representing a gain of 0.48 years and placing it nearly on par with the 2019 pre-pandemic level (82.22 years). The increase in 2024 was more pronounced among males (+0.55 years to 80.03 years) than females (+0.41 years to 84.29 years).

At the subnational level, life expectancy at birth increased most significantly in the western provinces from 2023 to 2024, specifically in Saskatchewan (+0.68 years), Alberta (+0.82 years) and British Columbia (+0.62 years). Among females, life expectancy at birth in British Columbia in 2024 (85.07 years) surpassed the 2019 pre-pandemic value (84.96 years).

Cancer remains the leading cause of death among Canadians in 2024

Cancer remained the leading cause of death in 2024, accounting for over one-quarter (26.2%) of all deaths. It was the leading cause of death among both males and females and in all provinces and territories. Cancer has been the leading cause of death in Canada since the early 1990s, when it overtook diseases of the heart.

The other causes among the top 10 leading causes of death for 2024 were diseases of the heart (17.7%), accidents (6.2%), stroke (4.2%), chronic lower respiratory disease (4.0%), influenza and pneumonia (2.3%), diabetes (2.1%), Alzheimer's disease (1.6%), COVID-19 (1.5%) and liver disease (1.4%).

While the top 10 leading causes of death consisted of the same causes in 2023 and in 2024, their rankings differed, owing predominantly to the changes in the number of deaths attributed to influenza and pneumonia and to COVID-19.

Deaths due to pneumonia are high in 2024

The number of deaths attributed to influenza and pneumonia increased by 20.0% from 2023 to 2024, moving it from the eighth leading cause of death in 2023 to the sixth in 2024. However, the number of influenza and pneumonia deaths combined in 2024 (7,658) was below the peak number of influenza and pneumonia deaths recorded in 2018 (8,600).

In 2024, the number of deaths due to pneumonia rose 13.3% over 2023 to 6,445, exceeding the number of deaths due to pneumonia in 2018 (6,288). However, after controlling for population size and changes in the age structure, the effects of pneumonia were more severe in 2017 (18.0 deaths per 100,000 people) and 2018 (17.8 deaths) compared with 2024 (15.5 deaths).

Influenza and pneumonia hit Canada's elderly the hardest in 2024. Over half (52.6%) of the deaths due to influenza and pneumonia that year involved individuals 85 years and older.



During the pandemic, deaths by influenza dropped significantly, while deaths by pneumonia also dropped, albeit to a lesser extent. This was perhaps due to social distancing and other public health measures taken to control the spread of COVID-19 and perhaps to mortality displacement (people most susceptible to the severe effects of influenza and pneumonia were also the most vulnerable to those of COVID-19). In 2021, for example, there were 20 deaths attributed to influenza and 4,119 deaths due to pneumonia. Typically, deaths attributed to pneumonia are five times higher than deaths attributed to influenza.

Deaths due to COVID-19 continue to fall in 2024, dropping to ninth among leading causes of death

Although the World Health Organization declared an end to the COVID-19 global health emergency in May 2023, COVID-19 continued to claim lives in Canada in 2024. The national number of deaths due to COVID-19 decreased 36.6% from 7,978 in 2023 to 5,056 in 2024, dropping COVID-19 from the sixth leading cause of death in Canada to the ninth.

In 2024, elderly Canadians remained the most vulnerable to COVID-19. Over half (54.1%) of deaths due to COVID-19 involved Canadians 85 years and older, while 1.2% of deaths due to COVID-19 occurred among those younger than 50 years. The number of deaths due to COVID-19 among people 85 years and older was evenly split between males and females in 2024.

Ranking causes of death is an informative way to present mortality statistics, supplementing other measures of mortality, such as death rates and the life table. Starting in 2000, Statistics Canada has used a list of 50 rankable causes of death developed by the National Center for Health Statistics of the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to identify the leading causes of death. Except for the addition of COVID-19 in 2020, that list has been used unchanged since its adoption. However, over this period, the relative burden of the 51 causes of death has decreased; they accounted for 88.0% of all deaths in Canada in 2000 and 76.4% in 2024. In contrast, other causes not reflected in the list, like dementia, have increased in importance.

Deaths due to dementia continue to rise

There were 27,825 deaths attributed to dementia in 2024, up 4.8% from 2023. Though it is not a rankable cause of death, if dementia were included in the top 10 leading causes of death, it would place third, behind cancer and diseases of the heart and ahead of accidents.

Excluding 2020, the year the pandemic began, the number of dementia deaths has grown steadily each year since 2000, largely due to Canada's aging population.

In 2024, 70.8% of the deaths due to dementia involved Canadians 85 years and older. Due to women's longer life expectancy and other biological factors, women are at a greater risk of developing dementia. Indeed, females accounted for almost two-thirds (63.1%) of dementia deaths in Canada in 2024.

Note to readers

A preliminary dataset from the Canadian Vital Statistics - Death database, covering the 2024 reference year, is being released today. Revised data covering the years 2016 to 2023 are also being released. The "Visualizing mortality in Canada: Rates and counts by age group for select causes of death" dashboard has been updated with the new and revised data on deaths. Furthermore, the tables in Statistics Canada's Common Output Database Repository have been updated to reflect the [updated data on deaths](#) for the years 2000 to 2015, released on January 28, 2020.

The data released today are preliminary, as deaths investigated by coroners or medical examiners, such as suicides, accidents and homicides, often require lengthy investigation. Consequently, information on these causes of death, particularly among younger Canadians, whose deaths are more likely to result in an investigation, typically requires more time before being reported to Statistics Canada.

Due to uncertainty surrounding death counts corresponding to residents of Yukon from 2017 to 2022, three-year abridged life tables have not been calculated for Yukon for the periods 2015/2017 to 2022/2024. Furthermore, data for Yukon have been suppressed in table 13-10-0710-01 (Mortality rates, by age group for the years 2017 to 2022). Where data are available for this period, they should be interpreted with caution.

Life expectancy represents the average number of years lived by a hypothetical cohort exposed at each age to the mortality conditions observed during a given year or period.

The causes of death are coded and classified according to the "International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision" (ICD-10), created and promulgated by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The tabulation of the causes of death is based on the underlying cause of death, which is defined by the WHO as the disease or injury that initiated the train of events leading directly to death, or as the circumstances of the accident or violence that produced the fatal injury. The underlying cause of death is selected from the causes and conditions listed on the medical certificate of cause of death, which is completed by a medical professional, medical examiner or coroner.

There is no cause-of-death code within ICD-10 to identify deaths that occur under Canada's medical assistance in dying (MAID) provision. Rather, these deaths are coded to the health condition that led the decedents to avail themselves of MAID, in accordance with the WHO's international standards and practices. These consistent standards are used to code deaths according to their underlying health conditions to monitor trends in population health, and inform health policy both within Canada and internationally.

The list used to rank leading causes of death is based on the list that was developed and is being used by the National Center for Health Statistics of the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in their annual report on leading causes of death.

The age-standardized mortality rate shows the number of deaths per 100,000 population that would have occurred in each area if the age structure of the population of that area was the same as the age structure of a specified standard population. The age-standardized mortality rates use the 2021 population.

The cause of death category "ill-defined and unspecified causes of mortality" is used when the underlying cause of death is undetermined or unknown. Deaths are assigned to this category when: the investigation failed to conclusively establish a specific cause of death—i.e., the medical certificate of cause of death indicates "undetermined," or the causes of death indicated on the medical certificate lack detail (e.g., cardiac arrest)—or the death is pending investigation by a coroner or medical examiner (e.g., deaths from accidents, suicides and homicides). Over time, as the causes of death become known and are reported to Statistics Canada, deaths in this category are recategorized accordingly and the number of deaths attributed to ill-defined and unspecified causes of mortality decreases. Starting with the 2020 reference year, Statistics Canada has added these subcategories: R99.1—pending investigation; R99.2—information on cause of death not yet received; R99.9—other ill-defined and unspecified causes of mortality. These subcategories were derived to provide additional granularity to this code and an indication of the number of records whose R99 codes are likely to change over the following one or two years.

Sex assigned at birth based on a person's reproductive system and other physical characteristics is used to disaggregate estimates for males and females.

Available tables: [13-10-0114-01](#), [13-10-0140-01](#) to [13-10-0156-01](#) , [13-10-0391-01](#), [13-10-0392-01](#), [13-10-0394-01](#), [13-10-0395-01](#), [13-10-0707-01](#) to [13-10-0716-01](#) , [13-10-0756-01](#), [13-10-0776-01](#), [13-10-0780-01](#), [13-10-0782-01](#), [13-10-0837-01](#), [13-10-0932-01](#) and [13-10-0933-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3233](#).

The dashboards "[Visualizing mortality in Canada: Rates and counts by age group for select causes of death](#)" and "[Visualizing mortality in Canada: Rates and counts by sex and province or territory for select causes of death](#)" have been updated with new and revised data for deaths from 2000 to 2024.

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 (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).