

Deaths, 2019

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There were 284,082 deaths in 2019, the highest annual total since the vital statistics registration system was introduced in 1921. The increase in the number of deaths is expected and is due to population growth and aging.

At the provincial and territorial level, the largest increase in deaths was observed in Nunavut (+9.7%). Quebec (-0.6%), Saskatchewan (-1.3%) and the Northwest Territories (-5.9%) saw a decrease in the number of deaths compared with the previous year. For the other provinces and territories, increases of less than 2.0% were recorded.

There were slightly more male deaths (145,562) than female deaths (138,520) in Canada in 2019. With the exception of deaths among children less than 1 year of age, which is higher than deaths among children between 1 and 14 years, the number of deaths increases with age, peaking among people aged 85 and older. Among males (21,834), the greatest number of deaths was recorded in the 85-to-89 age group, while among females (23,753), there were more deaths in the 90-to-94 age group. Females have a longer life expectancy than males.

New information about deaths in 2019, released today, is from the Canadian Vital Statistics – Death Database. These data provide a comprehensive overview of mortality in Canada and are an important baseline of mortality prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, Statistics Canada also released [provisional death counts and excess mortality](#) for the period January to September 2020, which is an important benchmark for understanding the potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada.

For the first time, life expectancy at birth for Canadian males reaches 80 years

The life expectancy at birth of males reached 80.0 years in 2019 for the first time in Canada. To compare, the life expectancy of females reached that threshold in 1987, more than 30 years ago. In 2019, women could expect to live on average 84.2 years.

A little more than four years separates males' and females' life expectancy at birth. This gap has remained stable over the last seven years.

From 2018 to 2019, the life expectancy at birth increased by 0.1 years for males and 0.2 years for females. Among the provinces and territories, life expectancy increased almost everywhere.

Among males, life expectancy at birth in 2019 was highest in Quebec at 81.1 years, and lowest in Nunavut at 69.3 years.

Among females, the highest life expectancy at birth was observed in British Columbia (84.8 years) and the lowest was observed in Nunavut (72.8 years).

Life expectancy at 65 for females and males reached 22.2 years and 19.5 years in 2019, respectively, representing an increase of 0.1 years for each compared with the previous year.

Leading causes of death

Over the past two decades, cancer (malignant tumours) and heart disease have been the two leading causes of death in both males and females. Together, these two causes of death accounted for 46.7% of deaths in Canada in 2019.

In 2019, cancer and heart disease were the two leading causes of death in all provinces and territories, except Nunavut, where cancer was the leading cause of death, followed by suicide and then by heart disease.



The eight other leading causes of death in 2019 were accidents (unintentional injuries), cerebrovascular disease, chronic lower respiratory diseases, diabetes, influenza and pneumonia, Alzheimer's disease, suicide, and kidney disease (nephritis, nephritic and nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis).

In 2019, 200,672 deaths were attributable to the 10 leading causes of death, accounting for 70.6% of all deaths.

Table 1
Leading causes of death in Canada, 2019

	Rank	Number	%
Total, all causes of death		284,082	100.0
Cancer	1	80,152	28.2
Diseases of heart	2	52,541	18.5
Accidents (unintentional injuries)	3	13,746	4.8
Cerebrovascular diseases	4	13,660	4.8
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	5	12,823	4.5
Diabetes mellitus	6	6,912	2.4
Influenza and pneumonia	7	6,893	2.4
Alzheimer's disease	8	6,166	2.2
Suicide	9	4,012	1.4
Kidney diseases (Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis)	10	3,767	1.3
All other causes of death	-	83,410	29.4

Source(s): Table 13-10-0801-01.

Sustainable Development Goals

On January 1, 2016, the world officially began implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)—the United Nations' transformative plan of action that addresses urgent global challenges over the next 15 years. The plan is based on 17 specific sustainable development goals.

The release on deaths is an example of how Statistics Canada supports the reporting on the Global Goals for Sustainable Development. This release will be used in helping to measure the following goal:



Note to readers

The collection period was shortened in 2019 compared with previous years. As a result, 2019 data are considered preliminary. The data will be revised in future releases.

Data on the causes and number of deaths for deaths that occurred in Yukon or to residents of Yukon in other provinces and territories are not available.

Data on deaths and causes of death are included in the Canadian Vital Statistics – Death Database. It is an administrative survey that collects demographic and medical (cause of death) information annually from all provincial and territorial vital statistics registries on all deaths in Canada.

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 [13-10-0713-01](#) , [13-10-0715-01](#), [13-10-0716-01](#), [13-10-0756-01](#), [13-10-0776-01](#), [13-10-0780-01](#), [13-10-0782-01](#), [13-10-0800-01](#) and [13-10-0801-01](#).

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

The 2017-2019 Complete Life Tables (for Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia) and abridged life tables (for Prince Edward Island, Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut) are now available. See *Life Tables, Canada, Provinces and Territories* ([84-537-X](#)).

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; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).