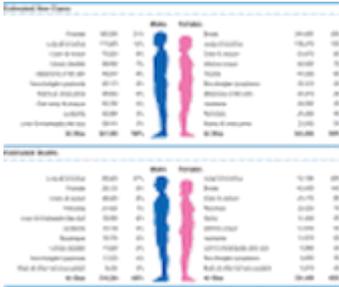


# Latest Cancer Stats Show Ongoing Reduction in Deaths

By Gil Ross — January 8, 2016



The new cancer statistics report from the American Cancer Society, "

[Cancer Statistics, 2016](#) [1], delivers more good news about the nation's declining death toll from this disease. Since peaking in 1991, cancer death rates have dropped by 23 percent, translating to more than 1.7 million deaths averted through 2012.

Each year, the ACS estimates the numbers of new cancer cases and deaths that will occur in the United States, and it compiles the most recent data on cancer incidence, mortality, and survival.

In 2016, 1,685,210 new cancer cases and 595,690 cancer deaths are projected to occur in the United States. Overall cancer incidence trends are stable in women, but declining by 3.1 percent per year in men (from 2009-2012), much of which is because of recent rapid declines in prostate cancer diagnoses.

Despite this progress, death rates are increasing for cancers of the liver, pancreas, and uterine corpus, and cancer is now the leading cause of death in 21 states, primarily due to exceptionally large reductions in death from heart disease.

Among children and adolescents, brain cancer has surpassed leukemia as the leading cause of cancer death because of the dramatic therapeutic advances against leukemia.

Incidence data were collected by the National Cancer Institute (Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results [SEER] Program), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (National Program of Cancer Registries), and the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries. Mortality data were collected by the National Center for Health Statistics.

The report's lead author is Rebecca L. Siegel, MPH, strategic director for surveillance information services for the American Cancer Society.

Over the past decade, the rate of cancer deaths has dropped by 1.8 percent a year in men and 1.4 percent in women, according to the report. The decline in the past 20 years has been driven by the continuous drop in deaths for four major cancer types: breast, colon, lung and prostate.

It is far from unexpected to see the continuing decline in cancer deaths, for the obvious reasons

that cancer rates the incidence of new cancers are declining (mostly thanks to the continuing downward trend in smoking) and the progress being made in earlier diagnosis and more effective treatments of many cancers. Earlier diagnosis of cancers of the colorectum and lung attributable to higher rates of screening colonoscopy and newly-advocated screening spiral CT scans of the lungs, respectively, have lowered mortality from those conditions, although they are still taking around 200,000 lives between them.

"There was nothing surprising" in the new report, said Dr. Steven Rosen, director of the City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center and Beckman Research Institute in Duarte, CA, [speaking with HealthDay](#) [2]. He added that obesity, which is linked with many cancers, must be addressed.

He went so far as to say that his concern was that obesity might replace smoking as the number one cause of cancer. Among the cancers that may be linked to obesity are breast, colon, endometrial, esophagus, gallbladder, kidney, pancreas, prostate and thyroid, Dr. Rosen said.

Interestingly, while heart disease remains the number one killer of Americans overall, cancer is the leading cause of death among both men and women between the ages of 40 and 79; heart disease deaths rise dramatically in the older age groups.

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[1] <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.3322/caac.21332/full>

[2] <http://consumer.healthday.com/cancer-information-5/mis-cancer-news-102/cancer-death-rates-down-by-23-percent-over-a-decade-study-706748.html>