

# Deaths, 2022

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There were 334,623 deaths in Canada in 2022, an increase of 7.3% from 2021. This increase was noted across all provinces and territories except Nunavut. The age-standardized mortality rate, which removes the effects of differences in the age structure of a population over time, also increased, from 907.2 deaths per 100,000 population in 2021 to 972.5 deaths in 2022. In 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the age-standardized mortality rate was 830.5 deaths.

New preliminary information on 2022 deaths is available today from the Canadian Vital Statistics - Death database. Death data from 2019, 2020 and 2021 have also been revised to reflect the latest data available.

## Life expectancy decreases for a third year in a row

For the third year in a row, life expectancy at birth of Canadians fell, from 81.6 years in 2021 to 81.3 years in 2022. The decline in 2022 (-0.3 years) was greater than in 2021 (-0.1 years) and was half that observed from 2019 to 2020 (-0.6 years). In 2022, the decline was more prominent among females (-0.4) than among males (-0.2). From 2021 to 2022, life expectancy at birth declined in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba. In Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, where substantial declines were observed from 2020 to 2021, life expectancy at birth was essentially unchanged from 2021 to 2022.

Changes in life expectancy at birth in Canada are due to a number of factors. Life expectancy increases when there are fewer deaths in general, or when deaths tend to occur at older ages, or a combination of both. Life expectancy declines when there are more deaths, when deaths occur at younger ages, or a combination of both.

By examining changes in deaths by age group, it is possible to identify some of the causes that were responsible for the recent change in life expectancy in Canada. In 2022, the increase in deaths among younger age groups can, in part, be attributable to deaths under investigation by a coroner or medical examiner, which are typically unintentional injuries (e.g., substance-related toxicity deaths), suicides and homicides. Such deaths are classified as "other ill-defined and unspecified causes of mortality" until a final cause of death is determined.

## Cancer and heart disease remain the two leading causes of death in 2022

Cancer and heart disease remained the two leading causes of death in Canada, accounting for 41.8% of deaths in 2022. In 2021, cancer and heart disease accounted for 44.3% of all deaths.

Completing the top 10 leading causes of death in 2022 were COVID-19, accidents (unintentional injuries), cerebrovascular disease (stroke), chronic lower respiratory diseases, diabetes mellitus, influenza and pneumonia, Alzheimer's disease, and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis.

In 2022, 227,705 deaths were attributable to the 10 leading causes of death, accounting for 68.2% of all deaths.



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**Table 1**  
**Top 10 leading causes of death (2019 to 2022)**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
	number of deaths				rank			
<b>Total, all causes of death</b>	<b>285,301</b>	<b>308,412</b>	<b>311,640</b>	<b>334,081</b>	...	...	...	...
Malignant neoplasms	80,372	81,242	82,822	82,412	1	1	1	1
Diseases of heart	53,364	54,430	55,271	57,357	2	2	2	2
COVID-19	...	15,890	14,466	19,716	...	4	4	3
Accidents (unintentional injuries)	15,527	16,818	19,257	18,365	3	3	3	4
Cerebrovascular diseases	13,717	13,761	13,491	13,915	4	5	5	5
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	12,902	11,844	11,018	12,462	5	6	6	6
Diabetes mellitus	6,987	7,654	7,472	7,557	6	7	7	7
Influenza and pneumonia	6,945	6,037	4,115	5,985	7	8	10	8
Alzheimer's disease	6,181	5,788	5,471	5,413	8	9	8	9
Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	3,708	4,199	4,617	4,530	11	10	9	10
Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis	3,770	4,065	3,978	4,234	10	12	11	11
Intentional self-harm (suicide)	4,581	4,152	3,769	3,593	9	11	12	13
Other ill-defined and unspecified causes of mortality	3,378	6,841	9,471	16,043	...	...	...	...

... not applicable

Source(s): Table 13-10-0394-01.

## COVID-19 deaths highest since start of the pandemic

The number of COVID-19 deaths increased from 14,466 in 2021 to 19,716 in 2022, the highest number of such deaths recorded since the beginning of the pandemic. This increase may in part be due to the exposure to new highly transmissible COVID-19 variants and the gradual return to normalcy (e.g., reduced restrictions and masking requirements).

The proportion of COVID-19 deaths among older Canadians aged 65 years and older rose to 91.4% in 2022, approaching early pandemic levels. This increase was largely felt by seniors aged 80 years and older, who experienced a 78.2% increase in COVID-19 deaths from 2021 to 2022. In contrast, deaths due to COVID-19 decreased to 8.6% for those younger than 65 years in 2022.

During the first year of the pandemic, older Canadians (65 years of age and older) accounted for 94.1% of COVID-19 deaths, while those aged 45 to 64 years accounted for 5.3%. In 2021, while the number of COVID-19 deaths among individuals aged 65 years and older (82.0%) remained high, the proportion of deaths among those aged 45 to 64 years nearly tripled to 15.5%.

## COVID-19 deaths increase sevenfold in Atlantic Canada

In 2022, the rate of COVID-19 deaths increased across all Canadian regions, except the Prairies (i.e., Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta). The largest increase was in Atlantic Canada, where the rate of COVID-19 deaths in 2022 (59.5 deaths per 100,000 population) was more than seven times higher than in 2021 (8.3 deaths). In 2022, the rate of COVID-19 deaths increased by 38.3% to 54.5 deaths in Central Canada (i.e., Quebec and Ontario) and by 29.6% to 41.6 deaths in Western Canada (i.e., British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut).

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## Deaths due to influenza and pneumonia on the rise

The number of deaths due to influenza and pneumonia varies by year and season. Deaths due to influenza and pneumonia increased by 45.4% from 2021 (4,115 deaths) to 2022 (5,985). Despite this increase, the number of deaths due to influenza and pneumonia in 2022 was 13.8% lower than in 2019. Deaths due to influenza and pneumonia hit an all-time low in 2021, in part due to the public health measures in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Males and females aged older than 80 years accounted for 67.2% of all influenza and pneumonia deaths in 2022. Females accounted for 53.5% of these deaths and males, 46.5%.

### Note to readers

*A preliminary dataset from the Canadian Vital Statistics - Death database, covering the 2022 reference year, was released today. Revisions were also made to the data covering the 2019, 2020 and 2021 reference years.*

*The data released today are preliminary, as they do not include information on deaths having occurred in Yukon. Furthermore, deaths investigated by coroners or medical examiners, such as suicides, accidents and homicides, often require lengthy investigation. Consequently, information on the causes of death, particularly among younger Canadians, whose deaths are more likely to result in an investigation, typically requires more time before it is reported to Statistics Canada.*

*The tabulation of the causes of death is based on the underlying causes of death, which is defined by the World Health Organization 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 completed by a medical professional, medical examiner or coroner.*

*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 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 used the 2011 population.*

**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](#), [13-10-0800-01](#), [13-10-0801-01](#) and [13-10-0837-01](#).

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

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