

DEATHS

There were 5,488 resident deaths in 2012, 53 more than in 2011. The crude death rate increased from 8.7 to 8.8 per 1,000/population. The death rate has fluctuated between 8.0 and 8.8 since 1988; prior to then it had been slowly declining from 11.2 in 1960, to 10.0 in 1970, down to 9.0 in 1980. The Vermont crude death rate was slightly lower than the U.S. crude death from 1988 through 2005, and has been slightly higher than the U.S. crude death rate since 2007 ([Figure 8](#)).

From the 1960's through 2006 the two leading causes of death in Vermont were heart disease and cancer, respectively. In 2007 cancer took over as the leading cause of death among Vermonters. Cancer and heart disease accounted for 46.3 percent of the deaths in 2012 ([Table C-11](#)). The crude death rate for cancer (malignant neoplasms) rose steadily through the 1980's and 1990's before starting to decline in this decade. After a high of 204.0 per 100,000/population in 2001, the rate decreased to 194.1 in 2006, increased to 223.1 in 2010 and decreased to 212.8 in 2012.

In contrast, the heart disease crude death rate peaked in the 1960's at 439.5 deaths per 100,000/population, but has decreased significantly since then. The rate for 2012 was 193.1 per 100,000/population ([Table C-1](#)).

Chronic lower respiratory diseases (formerly referred to as chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases) have been the third leading cause of death among Vermont residents since 2005. The crude death rate for this cause increased from 33.0 in the period from 1979 to 1981 to 50.9 in 2000. After a slight decrease in 2001, and another decrease in 2002, the rate has fluctuated through the rest of the decade. In 2012, the rate was 58.3 per 100,000/population up from 53.5 in 2010.

Accidents (or unintentional injuries) maintained its position as the fourth leading cause of death in Vermont, since 2005. The crude death declined to 31.3 in 1994 to 1996. From the mid 1990's through 2006, the death rate continued to increase, but has leveled off in recent years. The crude rate for 2012 was 52.6, an increase over the 2011 rate of 47.9.

The crude death rate from Alzheimer's disease steadily increased throughout the 1990's and into this decade, resulting in movement up from the tenth to the seventh leading cause of death in 1999. In 2004, Alzheimer's disease moved up to the sixth leading cause of death, and remained there through 2010. In 2011 Alzheimer's moved up as the fifth leading cause of death in Vermont. The crude death rate for Alzheimer's disease in 2012 was 47.1.

Cerebrovascular diseases, or stroke, dropped from the third leading cause of death in 2004 to the fifth leading cause beginning in 2005. In 2011 cerebrovascular diseases dropped to the sixth leading cause of death in Vermont. The crude death rate for cerebrovascular diseases has dropped significantly from its peak of 131.9 in the early 1960's to 44.1 in 2012.

Diabetes remained the seventh leading cause of death in Vermont in 2012, and the rate fluctuated throughout the last decade, from 26.9 in 2000 to 29.6 in 2003, 27.4 in 2007 to 24.0 in 2010, and up to 28.4 in 2012.

Intentional self-harm (suicide) remained the eighth leading cause of death in 2012. The death rate increased steadily from 12.0 in 2005 to 19.2 in 2011 before dropping to 13.7 in 2012.

The ninth leading cause of death in Vermont in 2012 was influenza and pneumonia with a crude rate of 12.1. Influenza and pneumonia was 10th on the leading cause list in 2011.

Parkinson's disease was the tenth leading cause of death in Vermont in 2012 with a crude rate of 8.5 deaths per 100,000/population. Parkinson's disease was not on the 10 leading cause list in 2011, but was the 9th leading cause of death in 2010.

The leading causes of death varied with age ([Table C-2](#)) and ([Table C-14](#)). Unintentional injuries were the leading cause of death for people age 15 to 44. Cancer was the leading cause of death, followed by heart disease for 45-84 year olds, and at ages 85 and higher, the causes were reversed with heart disease as the leading cause, followed by cancer.

Death rates dramatically increase after age 75. While people age 75 and over comprised only 6.8 percent of the total population, they accounted for 60.8 percent of total deaths. Except for accidents and influenza and pneumonia, the leading causes of death in this age group were all chronic diseases.

The leading causes of death did vary by sex ([Table C-1](#)) and ([Table C-11](#)). While cancer and heart disease were the top two causes for both Vermont males and females, later rankings for cause of death varied.

Accidents were the fourth leading cause for of death for Vermont males, while accidents were the sixth leading cause of death for females. Alzheimer's disease was the third leading cause of death for Vermont females, while this cause was the sixth leading cause for males. Men had higher death rates than women due to chronic lower respiratory disease, diabetes, suicide and Parkinson's disease, while women had higher death rates due to cerebrovascular disease and influenza and pneumonia.

Deaths occurring in a hospital accounted for 35.8 percent of Vermont resident deaths ([Table C-17](#)), same as in 2010, and down from 62 percent in 1980, 53 percent in 1990, and 41.2 percent in 2000. In 2012, 29.8 percent of Vermont resident deaths occurred at home and 27.2 percent occurred in a nursing home.