



Media backgrounder: Lung cancer in Canada

Canadian Cancer Statistics 2023 provides insight into the current state of lung cancer in Canada. The report was developed by the Canadian Cancer Statistics Advisory Committee in collaboration with the Canadian Cancer Society, Statistics Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

About lung cancer

Lung cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Canada. It is the leading cause of death from cancer for both men and women in Canada. Lung cancer starts in the cells of the lung. There are 2 main types of lung cancer. Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) is the most common type of lung cancer. A cancerous tumour is a group of cancer cells that can grow into and destroy nearby tissue. It can also spread to other parts of the body. There are many risks for lung cancer. Smoking tobacco is the main risk factor for lung cancer, but people who don't smoke can also develop the disease. Other risks for lung cancer include exposure to second-hand smoke, radon, asbestos and some chemicals at work. People who have lung cancer have to deal with negative attitudes about the disease, called [stigma](#).

Report highlight: the lung cancer mortality rate is declining at the fastest rate reported to date and is declining faster than any other cancer type reported

- Overall, it's decreased by 3.8% per year since 2015 for both sexes combined. The magnitude of decline is comparable between sexes, by 4.3% per year since 2014 for males and 4.1% per year since 2016 for females.
- Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death, responsible for about 1 in 4 cancer deaths among people in Canada. In 2023, an estimated 20,600 lung cancer deaths are expected.
- Lung cancer is still one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers in Canada with 31,000 new cases expected in 2023. When considering both sexes combined, lung cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer. In 2023, slightly more females than males are expected to be diagnosed with lung cancer.

Other key findings from the report

- Survival for lung cancer has increased over time and survival is higher, on average, for people diagnosed at earlier stages. [For example, 5-year survival is estimated to be 62% for stage 1 but only 16% for stage 3 and 3% for stage 4.](#)
- An estimated 86,700 Canadians are expected to die from cancer in 2023. About 1 in 4 of these deaths is expected to be caused by lung and bronchus cancer.
- Almost 93% of lung cancer deaths are expected to occur among Canadians 60 years of age and older. About half of all lung cancer deaths are expected in the age range proposed for lung cancer screening in Canada (screening is suggested for people aged 55 to 74 years who currently or used to heavily smoke tobacco).
- The 5-year net survival for lung cancer is 22%. Survival is higher among females (26%) than males (19%). 10-year survival is 15%.
- For both sexes combined, survival for lung cancer is more than twice as high (43%) among people diagnosed between 15 and 44 years of age than it is among those



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diagnosed between 75 and 84 years of age (19%) and between 85 and 99 years of age (11%)

To learn more about cancer in Canada, visit cancer.ca/statistics and view the [full report](#). For more information, consult our [news release](#). Explore more cancer statistics for 20+ cancer types in the new interactive [Canadian Cancer Statistics Dashboard](#).

About Canadian Cancer Statistics

Canadian Cancer Statistics is developed by the Canadian Cancer Statistics Advisory Committee in collaboration with the Canadian Cancer Society, Statistics Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada with cancer data provided by the provincial and territorial cancer registries through the Canadian Cancer Registry. Cancer incidence and mortality data are from the Canadian Cancer Registry and the Canadian Vital Statistics Death databases, respectively, which are maintained at Statistics Canada. The data originate from the provincial and territorial cancer registries and vital statistics registrars. Statistics Canada completed most of the analyses related to this report with contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada. French translation of this report was completed by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The Canadian Cancer Society coordinates the production and dissemination of this publication and supports it with charitable funds. For more than 35 years, this publication has been providing information that helps decide what support and services are needed and what research should be done. It also helps assess the impact of prevention, early detection and treatment. For more information about *Canadian Cancer Statistics*, visit cancer.ca/statistics.

About the Canadian Cancer Society

The Canadian Cancer Society works tirelessly to save and improve lives. We fund the brightest minds in cancer research. We provide a compassionate support system for all those affected by cancer, from coast to coast and for all types of cancer. As the voice for Canadians who care about cancer, we work with governments to shape a healthier society. No other organization does all that we do to make lives better today and transform the future of cancer forever. Help us make a difference. Call 1-888-939-3333 or visit cancer.ca today.

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