

## DEATHS

There were 5,435 resident deaths in 2011, 54 more than in 2010. The crude death rate increased from 8.6 to 8.7 per 1,000/population. The death rate has fluctuated between 8.1 and 8.7 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 higher than the U.S. white crude death rate until 1970 when the rates converged and remained similar through 1980. From 1981 to 2010 Vermont's death rate was slightly lower than the U.S. white rate, but in 2011, the Vermont crude death rate was higher than the overall U.S. rate of 8.1.

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 46.6 percent of the deaths in 2011 ([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 191.8 in 2005 then steadily increased to a high of 223.1 in 2010 before decreasing to 215.2 in 2011.

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 2011 was 189.0 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 2011, the rate was 55.9 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 rate 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 2011 was 47.9 a slight increase over the 2010 rate of 47.5.

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 2011 was 41.0.

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 36.1 in 2011.

Diabetes remained the seventh leading cause of death in Vermont in 2011, 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 26.7 in 2011.

Intentional self-harm (or suicide) remained the eighth leading cause of death in 2010. The death rate has increased steadily from 12.0 in 2005 to 19.2 in 2011.

The ninth leading cause of death in Vermont in 2011 was chronic liver disease and cirrhosis with a crude rate of 11.8. This cause was absent from the leading cause list since 2009.

Influenza and pneumonia moved down to the tenth leading cause of death in Vermont in 2011 with a crude rate of 10.7 deaths per 100,000/population.

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 6.7 percent of the total population, they accounted for 60.1 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 as in 2010 ([Table C-1](#)) and ([Table C-11](#)). While cancer, heart disease and chronic lower respiratory diseases were the top three causes for both Vermont males and females, later rankings for cause of death varied.

Accidents, suicides, and cerebrovascular diseases ranked fourth, fifth, and sixth respectively for Vermont males while Alzheimer's disease, cerebrovascular diseases and then accidents, were the fourth, fifth, and sixth leading causes of death for Vermont females.

Diabetes was the seventh leading cause of death among both sexes. Alzheimer's disease, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis and Parkinson's disease were the eighth, ninth and tenth leading causes of death for Vermont males, with influenza and pneumonia, essential hypertension and hypertensive renal disease and in situ neoplasms and benign neoplasms rounding out the top ten for Vermont females.

Deaths occurring in a hospital accounted for 27.4 percent of Vermont resident deaths ([Table C-17](#)), down from 62 percent in 1980, 53 percent in 1990, 41.2 percent in 2000, and 35.8 in 2010. In 2011, 29 percent of Vermont resident deaths occurred at home and 29.4 percent occurred in a nursing home.