

## DEATHS

There were 5,028 resident deaths in 2009, 167 less than in 2008. The crude death rate decreased from 8.4 to 8.1 per 1,000 population. The death rate has fluctuated between 8.1 and 8.5 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. Since 1981, Vermont's death rate has been slightly lower than the U.S. white rate. The U.S. white rate for 2009 was 8.4. Comparisons are made to the U.S. white rate because 99 percent of Vermont residents who died in 2009 were white ([Table C-9](#)).

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 48.2 percent of the deaths in 2009 ([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 215.7 in 2007, and has decreased the past two years to 201.4 in 2009. 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 2009 was 188.5 per 100,000 ([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 decreased in 2002, the rate has fluctuated throughout this decade. In 2009, the rate was 58.4 per 100,000 population.

Accidents (or unintentional injuries) maintained its position as the fourth leading cause of death in Vermont, since 2005. The crude death rate for accidents peaked at 58.4 in the period from 1969 to 1971, and 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 2009 was 49.2.

Cerebrovascular diseases, or stroke, dropped from the third leading cause of death in 2004 to the fifth leading cause beginning in 2005. The crude death rate for cerebrovascular diseases has dropped significantly from its peak of 131.9 in the early 1960's to 35.2 in 2009.

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 2009. The crude death rate for Alzheimer's disease in 2009 was 30.6.

Diabetes remained the seventh leading cause of death in Vermont in 2009, and the rate has continued to fluctuate through this decade, from 26.9 in 2000 to 29.6 in 2003, 27.4 in 2007 to 22.8 in 2009.

Intentional self-harm (or suicide) remained the eighth leading cause of death in 2009. After a steady increase over the prior three years, 12.0 in 2005 to 15.1 in 2008, the rate decreased to 14.0 in 2009.

Parkinson's disease moved up to the ninth leading cause of death in Vermont in 2009, replacing influenza and pneumonia with a crude rate of 10.5 deaths per 100,000 population.

The tenth leading cause of death in Vermont in 2009 was chronic liver disease and cirrhosis which was replaced by Parkinson's disease in 2007 and in 2008, but moved back with a crude rate of 9.7 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 34. Cancer was the leading cause of death, followed by heart disease for 35-84 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 60.8 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 varied by sex as well ([Table C-1](#)) and ([Table C-11](#)). The top three causes for males were: cancer, heart disease and chronic lower respiratory diseases. For females they were: heart disease, cancer, and chronic lower respiratory diseases.

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

Suicide was the seventh leading cause of death among Vermont males, and Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease were tied for eighth, leaving chronic liver disease and cirrhosis as the tenth leading cause of death among males. Diabetes and nephritis, nephritic syndrome and nephrosis were ranked as the seventh and eighth leading causes of death for females, with hypertensive renal disease ranked ninth, and influenza and pneumonia, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, and in situ neoplasms, benign neoplasms and neoplasms of uncertain or unknown behavior tied for tenth among females.

Deaths occurring in a hospital accounted for 37 percent of Vermont resident deaths ([Table C-17](#)), down from 62 percent in 1980, 53 percent in 1990 and 41.2 percent in 2000. In 2009, 27.4 percent of Vermont resident deaths occurred at home, and 28.8 percent occurred in a nursing home.