

## LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH

In 2010, there were 1,219,545 deaths of women aged 18 and older in the United States. Of these deaths, nearly half were attributable to heart disease and cancer, which were responsible for 23.8 and 22.4 percent of deaths, respectively. Men had a similar relative burden of death due to heart disease (25.4 percent) and cancer (24.8 percent) but unintentional injury was the third leading cause of death (6.0 percent of deaths) for men compared to the sixth leading cause for women (3.5 percent of deaths). Women, however, had a greater relative burden of mortality from stroke, which was the third leading cause of death compared to the fifth leading cause for men. Following chronic lower respiratory diseases, Alzheimer's disease was the fifth leading cause of death for women but was ranked eighth for men (data for men not shown).

Leading causes of death vary greatly by age. While cancer and heart disease were prominent causes of death among women of all ages, unintentional injury was the leading cause of death among women aged 18–44 years and the third leading cause for those aged 45–64 years, compared to the ninth leading cause for women aged 65 and older. Intentional injuries, suicide and homicide, were the fourth and fifth leading causes of death, respectively, for women aged 18–44 years. HIV and pregnancy complications were the ninth and tenth leading causes of death

for younger women aged 18–44 but were not within the top ten causes for other age groups. Liver disease was also represented within the top ten causes of death only among women younger than 65. Conversely, Alzheimer's disease and flu and pneumonia were leading causes of death unique to women aged 65 and older. (For differences in leading causes of death by race and

ethnicity, see *Women's Health USA 2012*.)

Between 2000 and 2010, four causes of death increased in relative burden: chronic lower respiratory diseases (5.1 to 6.0 percent of deaths), Alzheimer's disease (2.9 to 4.8 percent of deaths), unintentional injury (2.6 to 3.5 percent of deaths), and kidney disease (1.6 to 2.1 percent of deaths; data from 2000 not shown).

### Ten Leading Causes of Death Among Women Aged 18 and Older, by Age, 2010

Source II.6: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System

Rank	Total	18-44 Years	45-64 Years	65 Years and Older
1	Heart Disease (23.8%)	Unintentional Injury (24.0%)	Cancer (38.3%)	Heart Disease (25.9%)
2	Cancer (22.4%)	Cancer (19.5%)	Heart Disease (16.2%)	Cancer (19.4%)
3	Stroke (6.3%)	Heart Disease (9.8%)	Unintentional Injury (5.7%)	Stroke (7.0%)
4	Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease (6.0%)	Suicide (7.1%)	Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease (4.8%)	Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease (6.4%)
5	Alzheimer's Disease (4.8%)	Homicide (3.9%)	Stroke (3.7%)	Alzheimer's Disease (5.9%)
6	Unintentional Injury (3.5%)	Stroke (2.6%)	Diabetes (3.4%)	Diabetes (2.6%)
7	Diabetes (2.8%)	Diabetes (2.3%)	Liver Disease (2.9%)	Flu & Pneumonia (2.4%)
8	Flu & Pneumonia (2.2%)	Liver Disease (2.2%)	Suicide (1.9%)	Kidney Disease (2.2%)
9	Kidney Disease (2.1%)	HIV (2.0%)	Septicemia (1.7%)	Unintentional Injury (2.1%)
10	Septicemia (1.5%)	Pregnancy Complications (1.6%)	Kidney Disease (1.6%)	Septicemia (1.5%)