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HEALTH

These are the 10 leading causes of death among US adults, the CDC says

USA FACTS took a deep dive into the data and shared mortality trends

By Melissa Rudy · Fox News

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Each year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) releases a list of the leading causes of death among U.S. adults.

USAFacts, a Washington-based nonprofit that compiles and reports on government data, took a deep dive into the latest data to identify any trends.

Among a total of 3.46 million deaths in the year 2021 (the most recent year for which data is available), 74.5% of these deaths were attributed to 10 causes, according to a Thursday press release from USAFacts.

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MATERNAL DEATH RATE IS ON THE RISE IN THE US, THE CDC REPORTS

The top three causes of death were heart disease, cancer and COVID-19, which accounted for more than half of the mortalities — despite the fact that death rates have been declining for both cancer and heart disease over the last 20 years.

Among a total of 3.46 million deaths in the year 2021, 74.5% of them were attributed to 10 causes. (iStock)

Below are the top 10 causes of death, which accounted for 75.4% of all deaths.

1. Heart disease: 695,547
2. Cancer: 605,213
3. COVID-19: 416,893
4. Accidents: 224,935
5. Stroke: 162,890
6. Chronic lower respiratory diseases: 142,342
7. Alzheimer's disease: 119,399
8. Diabetes: 103,294
9. Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis: 56,585
10. Kidney disease: 54,358

COVID-19 was the third-leading cause of death on the CDC's latest list. (iStock)

The age-adjusted death rate has decreased for six of these causes between 1999 and 2021, with the sharpest declines seen for influenza and pneumonia (-55.3%), heart disease (-34.8%) and strokes (-33.3%), according to the report.

HEART DISEASE DEATHS LINKED TO OBESITY HAVE TRIPLED IN 20 YEARS, STUDY FOUND: 'INCREASING BURDEN'

Not all causes of death have declined, however.

Alzheimer's disease deaths rose by 88%, while unintentional injury deaths rose 83% over the time period, USAFacts noted.

Deaths overall rose 2.4% since the prior list, going from 3.38 million in 2020 to 3.46 million in 2021.

People age 85 and older have the highest mortality rate across 14 of the 16 leading causes of death, according to a new study. (iStock)

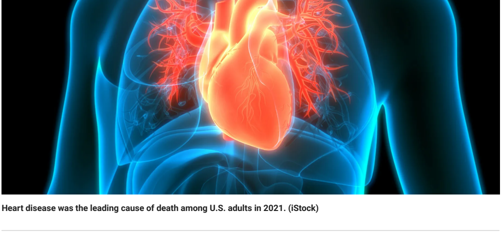
"Other causes of death may also factor into the rising death toll of 2021, namely those related to the COVID-19 pandemic — suicide and violent crimes, both of which have been on the rise in recent years," Dr. Brett Osborn, a Florida neurosurgeon and longevity expert who was not involved in the study, told Fox News Digital.

"I have witnessed this at the Level I trauma center where I operate, and it is paralleled in the statistics from the local health care district," he added.

OBESITY MAPS: CDC REVEALS WHICH US STATES HAVE THE HIGHEST BODY MASS INDEX AMONG RESIDENTS

People age 85 and older have the highest mortality rate across 14 of the 16 leading causes of death — with the exceptions of liver disease and homicide, which primarily affect younger groups.

Among genders, men had a higher mortality rate than women for all but two of the 17 leading causes of death.



Heart disease was the leading cause of death among U.S. adults in 2021. (iStock)

The data showed that men had a 61.9% higher rate of heart disease deaths and were more than 50% likely to die from an unintentional accident.

Women, however, were 47.5% more likely to die from Alzheimer's disease.

There were some disparities among races and ethnicities, USAFacts noted.

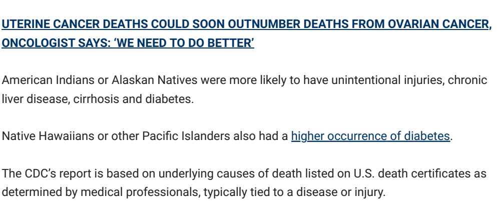
Black or African American individuals had higher rates of heart disease and hypertension.

UTERINE CANCER DEATHS COULD SOON OUTNUMBER DEATHS FROM OVARIAN CANCER, ONCOLOGIST SAYS: 'WE NEED TO DO BETTER'

American Indians or Alaskan Natives were more likely to have unintentional injuries, chronic liver disease, cirrhosis and diabetes.

Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders also had a higher occurrence of diabetes.

The CDC's report is based on underlying causes of death listed on U.S. death certificates as determined by medical professionals, typically tied to a disease or injury.



"Obesity is a gateway disease to nearly all other age-related diseases, such a cardiovascular disease, cancer and Alzheimer's disease, the latter of which has been on the rise proportional to the rising BMI (body mass index) of most Americans over the past 20 years," a doctor told Fox News Digital regarding the mortality data. (iStock)

The causes of death are categorized according to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, which is maintained by the World Health Organization (WHO).

'A call for change'

The CDC's mortality cause data suggests that "the overall health of the United States is in bad shape, mentally and physically," Osborn said.

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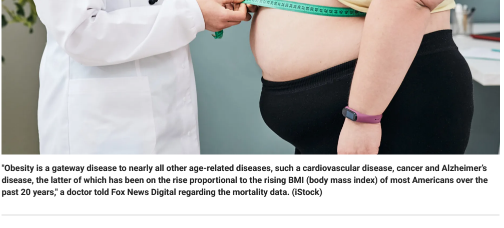
"COVID-19 ravaged the United States because nearly 75% of Americans are categorically overweight or obese by BMI (body mass index) standards," he noted.



The causes of death are categorized according to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, which is maintained by the World Health Organization. (REUTERS/Denis Balibouse/File Photo)

"Obesity is a gateway disease to nearly all other age-related diseases, such a cardiovascular disease, cancer and Alzheimer's disease, the latter of which has been on the rise proportional to the rising BMI of most Americans over the past 20 years," he said.

Unless adjustments are made, Osborn said, he believes the life expectancy of Americans will continue to decline, even as it has rebounded in similarly developed countries since the pandemic.

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"Despite our access to state-of-the-art technology and forefront innovations, our health, individually and as a nation, continues to falter," the doctor said. "This is a call for change."

Fox News Digital reached out to USAFacts for comment on the findings.

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Melissa Rudy is health editor and a member of the lifestyle team at Fox News Digital.

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califmoe
5 October, 2023
At least five of those could be lowered if the government would promote health and exercise. Bring back gym classes to K-12. Give tax deductions for taking gym class.
(Edited)
Reply · 110 8 · Share

hellobob
5 October, 2023
we need LESS government in our schools, not more. In fact, we need les government on our lives. Period.
Reply · 53 7 · Share
7 replies

needs.vs.wants
5 October, 2023
You're on the right track. Being fat is the reason for many of these conditions. Being fat is a choice. A choice of when to put the fork down. A choice of when to get out of our chair and move around. Those who choose a "being fat" lifestyle need to bear the cost of this, including paying much...
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9 replies

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irefused
5 October, 2023
So, with stats like these, why are people citing "stats" saying "gun violence" is a leading cause of death. I have live a long time and I am quite sure I have never seen a gun be violent. I have however seen thousands of violent people.
Reply · 72 2 · Share

multicamblack
5 October, 2023
I had a similar thought. Gun deaths would be a ways down the list, and many gun deaths are gang/drug related, or suicides. If you subtract those out, gun deaths would rank even lower. Problem is gun deaths and violence, especially mass shootings, make for sensational news stories/good ratings that ...**See more**
Reply · 5 · Share

JaxMurphy
5 October, 2023
The CDC is wrong. The number 1 cause of death is liberalism.
Reply · 23 1 · Share
1 reply

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fair_n_balanced
5 October, 2023
1. Heart disease: 695,547
2. Cancer: 605,213
3. COVID-19: 416,893
4. Accidents: 224,935
5.

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lucky_luke
5 October, 2023
In 2021, 54% of all gun-related deaths in the U.S. were suicides (26,328), while 43% were murders (20,958), according to the CDC. The remaining gun deaths that year were accidental (549), involved law enforcement (537) or had undetermined circumstances (458).
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5 replies

Dusty99
5 October, 2023
CDC doesn't count mass shootings as murder. If someone was killed in a mass shooting they classified it as Covid.
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2 replies

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wblack
5 October, 2023
the highest mortality rate was for people 85 and older? that took science to figure out?
Reply · 27 · Share
2 replies

FiddlersGreen
5 October, 2023
I find it extremely hard to believe that Covid is the actual singular cause of mortality as the number #3. I think it's more likely that the vast majority of those deaths counted under Covid actually had several of the other 9 conditions listed but also tested positive for Covid at some point.
Reply · 28 4 · Share
4 replies

miztersmith
5 October, 2023
I learned to NOT trust the CDC and Medical Industry when I worked in the Engineering Dept. at Robert F. Kennedy Medical Center in Hawthorne, Ca. in the 80's.
(Edited)
Reply · 22 · Share

funnyname729
5 October, 2023
I question the COVID count. It may have been an additional cause, but few healthy people died of COVID. Most had underlying conditions exacerbated by COVID.
Reply · 462 28 · Share

kevinkjt175
5 October, 2023
Notice flu and pneumonia weren't on the list. EVERYTHING is COVID.
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15 replies

agent00seven
5 October, 2023
I think something other than Covid caused many of those deaths and that a lot of data manipulation has been going on.
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4 replies

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doctorammo177
5 October, 2023
"People age 85 and older have the highest mortality rate across 14 of the 16 leading causes of death..." Well thanks for pointing out the obvious. Maybe if old people didn't die, the rates of death in American would come down dramatically. And to think taxpayers spent good money to study this is...
See more
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occupiedcalifornia
5 October, 2023
Send me a grant of $10 million. I can come up with the same statistics. It's probably cheaper than their study. I'll even throw this in: "When your heart stops, and you quit breathing, death is imminent. That is especially true for people 85 years plus"
There. Where's my $10 mil?
Reply · 3 · Share

me1212
5 October, 2023
Totally laughed out loud. I woke my cat.
Reply · 2 · Share

kevindonahue617
5 October, 2023
Covid 19 deaths are drastically overstated; in the years to come, these numbers will be revised. Anyone with Covid 19 who expired was declared as a death despite any existing co-morbidities.
Reply · 13 1 · Share
2 replies

mthomasj
5 October, 2023
"With the sharpest declines seen for influenza and pneumonia (-55.3%)" because they called it COVID in order to collect more money.

Reply · 169 8 · Share

speakingtoyou
5 October, 2023

Remember, Democrats staked their entire reputation on these experimental shots by Mandating it.
They are not about to come clean regarding their "Vaccine" injuries and deaths.

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3 replies

EducatedConservative
5 October, 2023

EXACTLY!!

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