

Common Causes of Death – Adults and Young People



Deaths are much more common in the older population groups. Older residents most often die from chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer. It is more common for younger residents to die from an injury.

Age 65+

Heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease and influenza and pneumonia are the leading causes of death among Contra Costa residents age 65 and over.

Understandably, people age 65 and over have the highest risk of death and account for 75% of all deaths countywide. Over a three-year period 2000-2002, there were 15,336 deaths among Contra Costa residents age 65 and over. This means that there are approximately 5,112 deaths each year among older residents.



Table 9. Most common causes of death for residents age 65+. Contra Costa, 2000-2002

	Percent	(Number)	Rate
1. Heart disease	30.5%	(4,680)	1,422.9
2. Cancer	22.7%	(3,475)	1,056.6
3. Stroke	10.4%	(1,602)	487.1
4. Chronic lower respiratory disease*	6.4%	(980)	298.0
5. Influenza and pneumonia	3.7%	(561)	170.6

* Chronic lower respiratory disease includes bronchitis, emphysema and asthma. (Rates are per 100,000)

Age 45-64 years

Cancer, heart disease, unintentional injuries (accidents), stroke and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis are the leading causes of death among Contra Costa residents age 45-64 years.

People age 45-64 years account for 18% of all deaths countywide. Over a three-year period 2000-2002, there were 3,632 deaths among Contra Costa residents

between the ages of 45 and 64. This means that there are approximately 1,210 deaths each year among adults in this age group.

Table 10. Most common causes of death for residents age 45-64 years. Contra Costa, 2000-2002

	Percent	(Number)	Rate
1. Cancer	36.9%	(1,341)	188.3
2. Heart disease	22.4%	(815)	114.4
3. Unintentional injuries (accidents)	4.5%	(165)	23.2
4. Stroke	4.5%	(163)	22.9
5. Chronic liver disease and Cirrhosis	4.0%	(144)	20.2

(Rates are per 100,000)

Age 25-44 years



Unintentional injuries (accidents), cancer, heart disease, suicide and homicide are the leading causes of death among Contra Costa residents age 25-44 years.

People age 25-44 years have a much lower risk of dying and account for 5% of all

deaths countywide. Between 2000 and 2002, there were 1,033 deaths among Contra Costa residents age 25-44 years. This means that there are approximately 345 deaths each year among adults in this age group.

Table 11. Most common causes of death for residents age 25-44 years. Contra Costa, 2000-2002

	Percent	(Number)	Rate
1. Unintentional injuries	19.1%	(197)	22.4
2. Cancer	18.1%	(187)	21.3
3. Heart disease	11.0%	(114)	13.0
4. Suicide	8.6%	(89)	10.1
5. Homicide	6.8%	(70)	8.0

(Rates are per 100,000)

Age 0-24 years

Unintentional injuries (accidents), perinatal conditions, homicide, congenital abnormalities and cancer are the leading causes of death among Contra Costa residents age 0-24 years.

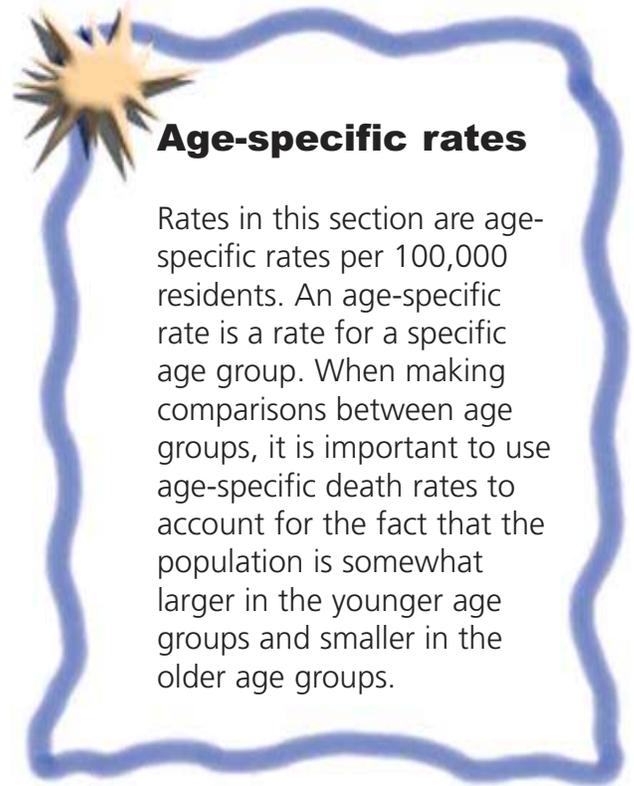
Infants, children and young adults have a very low risk of death and account for 3% of all deaths countywide. Between 2000 and 2002, there were 529 deaths among Contra Costa residents age 0-24 years. This means that there are approximately 175 deaths each year among Contra Costa infants, children and young adults.

Perinatal conditions include health conditions such as birth trauma, infections and respiratory conditions originating in the perinatal period. Congenital abnormalities include health conditions such as anencephaly, spina bifida, down's syndrome and congenital malformations of the heart, circulatory system and respiratory system.

Table 12. Most common causes of death for residents age 0-24 years. Contra Costa, 2000-2002

	Percent	(number)	Rate
1. Unintentional injuries	24.4%	(129)	12.9
2. Perinatal conditions	15.9%	(84)	8.4
3. Homicide	13.6%	(72)	7.2
4. Congenital abnormalities	11.0%	(58)	5.8
5. Cancer	6.4%	(34)	3.4

(Rates are per 100,000)



Age-specific rates

Rates in this section are age-specific rates per 100,000 residents. An age-specific rate is a rate for a specific age group. When making comparisons between age groups, it is important to use age-specific death rates to account for the fact that the population is somewhat larger in the younger age groups and smaller in the older age groups.

How to calculate the percentage and number of deaths

Percentages describe the proportion of deaths in an age group that are due to each cause. The percentage is calculated by dividing the number of deaths in an age group that are due to a particular cause by the total number of deaths in that age group and multiplying that number by 100.

Numbers show the actual number of deaths from each cause over a three-year period. The number of deaths per year can be calculated by dividing the total number of deaths from 2000-2002, as shown in the tables, by three.

Data sources

Mortality data from the California Department of Health Services (CDHS), <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/>, Center for Health Statistics' Death Statistical Master File, 2000-2002. Any analyses, interpretations or conclusions of the data have been reached by CHAPE and are not from the CDHS.

Population data from the California Department of Finance, Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 2000-2050, and E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State, 2001-2004, with DRU Benchmark, available online at: <http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/DEMOGRAP/Druhpar.htm>. Sacramento, California, May 2004.

Note: City-level denominators were extrapolated from the E-4 file to approximate the mid-year city-level population estimates that are needed to calculate city-level rates. For more information, please see our section on statistical methods.

ICD10 leading causes of death coding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics, available online at: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr50/nvsr50_16.pdf.