

Leading Causes of Death

Leading causes, as presented here, are based on the National Center for Health Statistics's (NSHS) "List of 113 Selected Causes of Death" that were developed based on their public health and medical importance and are used for national rankings¹. Each of these causes is a group of distinct diseases, like cancer, each with its own causes, risk factors, treatments, and preventive measures. In Spokane County, cancer and heart disease accounted for nearly half of all deaths in 2004.

**Number of Deaths by Leading Causes
Spokane County, 2004**

Rank	Cause	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Cancer	850	23.0	23.0
2	Heart Disease	846	22.9	46.0
3	Stroke	238	6.5	52.4
4	COPD* (Lower Respiratory Disease)	237	6.4	58.8
5	Unintentional Injuries	213	5.8	64.6
6	Alzheimer's Disease	200	5.4	70.0
7	Diabetes	132	3.6	73.6
8	Suicide	91	2.5	76.1
9	Influenza and Pneumonia	53	1.4	77.5
10	Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	43	1.2	78.7
	All Other Causes	788	21.3	100.0
	Total	3,691	100.0	

* Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Leading causes of death vary for different age groups. Some infants are born with health conditions that make survival difficult. Younger age groups incur proportionally more deaths from unintentional and intentional injuries than older age groups. Older age groups have a higher proportion of deaths due to physical health issues such as heart disease.

**Number of Deaths by Age Group
Top 3 Leading Causes
Spokane County, 2000-2004 Combined**

Age Group	Cause	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<1 year**	Perinatal Conditions	74	43.0	43.0
	Congenital Malformations	46	26.7	69.8
	Sudden Infant Death Syndrome	26	15.1	84.9
	All Other Causes	26	15.1	100.0
	Total	172	100.0	

1-14 years	Unintentional Injuries	24	39.3	39.3
	Cancer	10	16.4	55.7
	Homicide	7	11.5	67.2
	All Other Causes	20	32.8	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	

15-24 years	Unintentional Injuries	85	40.5	40.5
	Suicide	43	20.5	61.0
	Homicide	23	11.0	71.9
	All Other Causes	59	28.1	100.0
	Total	210	100.0	

25-44 years	Unintentional Injuries	231	26.7	26.7
	Cancer	129	14.9	41.6
	Suicide	119	13.8	55.4
	All Other Causes	386	44.6	100.0
	Total	865	100.0	

45-64 years	Cancer	974	33.2	33.2
	Heart Disease	592	20.2	53.3
	Unintentional Injuries	203	6.9	60.2
	All Other Causes	1,168	39.8	100.0
	Total	2,937	100.0	

65+ years	Heart Disease	3,872	27.3	27.3
	Cancer	3,098	21.9	49.2
	Stroke	1,284	9.1	58.3
	All Other Causes	5,908	41.7	100.0
	Total	14,162	100.0	

** The NCHS uses a separate leading cause of death list for infants than for other age groups.

Community Health Assessment

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¹ National Center for Health Statistics. Health, United States, 2002 With Chartbooks on Trends in the Health of Americans. Hyattsville, Maryland; 2002.