

Leading Causes of Death

Contra Costa and California

Cancer, heart disease and stroke were the most common causes of death in Contra Costa County.

- Heart disease and cancer accounted for roughly half of all deaths in Contra Costa and California.
- Contra Costa residents were more likely to die from homicide compared to California residents.

Between 2005–2007, there were 20,515 deaths among Contra Costa residents. This means that on average 6,838 county residents died each year. Contra Costa's age-adjusted death rate from all causes was significantly lower (651.2 per 100,000) than California's age-adjusted rate (754.6 per 100,000).

The top 10 leading causes accounted for a full 77.2% of the deaths in Contra Costa County and 79.5% of the deaths in California. The top four leading causes of death (cancer, heart disease, stroke and lower respiratory disease) were common to the county and state and accounted for 60.3% and 62.0% of deaths, respectively. Cancer and heart disease alone accounted for roughly half of all deaths—47.7% in the county and 50.3% in the state.

Table 1 ■ Leading causes of death

Contra Costa County, 2005–2007

	Deaths	Percent	Rate	
Cancer	5,131	25.0%	162.0**	Leading causes of death are those that are responsible for the greatest number of deaths. In this report, the leading causes of death are ranked according to number of deaths, which provides a picture of the overall burden of deaths from specific causes. The tables provide the top 10 leading causes of death for each group.
Heart disease	4,664	22.7%	147.5**	
Stroke	1,462	7.1%	46.7**	
Chronic lower respiratory disease	1,112	5.4%	36.0**	
Alzheimer's disease	870	4.2%	27.8**	
Unintentional injury	841	4.1%	26.8**	
Diabetes	592	2.9%	18.9**	
Influenza/pneumonia	575	2.8%	18.2**	
Essential hypertension/hypertensive renal disease/hypertensive renal disease	308	1.5%	9.7**	
Homicide	292	1.4%	10.0*	
Total	20,515	100.0%	651.2**	

Total includes deaths from all causes, including but not limited to those listed above. These are age-adjusted rates per 100,000 residents.

* Significantly higher rate than the state overall.

** Significantly lower rate than the state overall.

Table 2 ■ Leading causes of death

California, 2005–2007

	Deaths	Percent	Rate	
Heart disease	194,082	27.1%	212.9*	The injury, homicide and suicide rates here differ slightly from others in the report. See this section's table footnotes for further explanation.
Cancer	165,284	23.1%	168.6*	
Stroke	44,802	6.3%	49.5*	
Chronic lower respiratory disease	38,791	5.40	42.0*	
Unintentional injury	34,673	4.8%	32.4*	
Alzheimer's disease	24,473	3.4%	28.9*	
Diabetes	22,591	3.2%	23.4*	
Influenza/pneumonia	21,588	3.0%	24.5*	
Chronic liver disease/cirrhosis	11,835	1.7%	10.8*	
Suicide	10,263	1.4%	9.4	
Total	715,022	100.0%	754.6*	

Total includes deaths from all causes, including but not limited to those listed above.

These are age-adjusted rates per 100,000 residents.

* Significantly higher rate than the county overall.



Editor's note: See the Leading Causes Appendix for more complete numbers and age-adjusted rates for leading causes of death.

Contra Costa and California had the top eight leading causes of death in common. Essential hypertension/hypertensive renal disease was the ninth leading cause in Contra Costa and accounted for 308 deaths. Homicide was the 10th leading cause of death in Contra Costa. It accounted for 292 deaths in the county and was the only leading cause for which the Contra Costa rate was significantly higher than the California rate. Chronic liver disease/cirrhosis and suicide were the ninth and 10th leading causes of death in the state but were 11th and 12th in Contra Costa.

Like the all-cause death rate, the death rates for cancer, heart disease, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease, Alzheimer's disease, unintentional injuries, diabetes, influenza and pneumonia, essential hypertension/hypertensive renal disease and chronic liver disease/cirrhosis were lower in Contra Costa compared to California. The rate for suicide was similar for the county and state (*see Appendix table for a full list of available rates*).

Data Sources: Leading Causes of Death for Contra Costa and California

Tables 1, 2: These tables include total deaths and age-adjusted average annual death rates per 100,000 for 2005-2007. Mortality data from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), <http://www.dph.ca.gov/>, Center for Health Statistics' Death Statistical Master File, 2005–2007. Any analyses or interpretations of the data were reached by the Community Health Assessment, Planning and Evaluation (CHAPE) Unit of Contra Costa Health Services and not the CDPH.

In this section, the number of deaths for unintentional injuries, homicide and suicide include late effects. In the Injury sections of this report, late effects are not included and the rates are crude, not age-adjusted so numbers, rates and conclusions may differ. A late effect is the residual effect (condition produced) after the acute phase of an illness or injury has terminated.

Population estimates for Contra Costa rates for 2005–2007 were provided by the Urban Strategies Council, Oakland, CA. January, 2010. Data sources used to create these estimates included: U.S. Census 2000, Neilsen Claritas 2009, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) 2009 Projections, and California Department of Finance Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State 2001-2009, with 2000 Benchmark.

California population estimate for state level rate from the State of California, Department of Finance, E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State, 2001–2009, with 2000 Benchmark. Sacramento, California, May 2009.