

Ups and Downs: A Look at New Cancer Statistics

Overall cancer death rates declined. Plus: It's estimated that 40% of cancers are related to modifiable risk factors.

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Overall cancer death rates declined from 2001 through 2022 for women, men and children, despite COVID-19 interruptions, finds the 2024 Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer, jointly issued by federal health agencies and the American Cancer Society (ACS). The decrease was driven by lower death rates for smoking-related cancers.

For men, the rates of new diagnoses, or cancer incidence, dropped from 2001 to 2013, then stabilized through 2021. For women, new cases rose slightly each year from 2003 to 2021 (2020 was the exception).

A separate ACS report shows mixed trends in cancer prevention and screenings post-COVID. Breast and colorectal screenings rebounded after a drop during the pandemic; cervical cancer screenings remain lower than before COVID, and human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccinations are flat. Although smoking rates continue a long-term decline, 27 million adults smoked in 2023. It's estimated that 40% of cancers are related to modifiable risk factors, such as tobacco use, alcohol consumption, excess body weight and lack of exercise.
