

The Top Ten Causes of Death in America

According to the CDC Division of Vital Statistics the following were the leading causes of death in 2002. These apply to both male and female adults. **Rank:**

1. Heart Disease - 28.5%
2. Malignant Neoplasm (Cancer) - 22.8%
3. Cerebrovascular Diseases (Stroke) - 6.7%
4. Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease - 5.1%
5. Accidents (Unintentional) - 4.4%
6. Diabetes Melitus - 3.0%
7. Influenza/Pneumonia - 2.7%
8. Alzheimer's - 2.4%
9. Nephritis(Liver Disease) - 1.7%
10. Septicemia - 1.4%

Another interesting statistic of note can be found in *"Is US Health Really the Best in the World?"*, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association and written by Barbara Starfield, MD, MPH. In this paper Dr. Starfield gives the following statistics:

- 7,000 deaths occur each year due to medication errors in hospitals
- 12,000 deaths occur each year due to unnecessary surgery
- 20,000 deaths occur each year due to other hospital errors
- 80,000 deaths occur each year due to nosocomial infections in hospitals
- 106,000 deaths occur each year due to adverse effects to properly prescribed medications

This equals 225,000 deaths due to what are known as iatrogenic causes. This would place them as the third leading cause of death - just above cerebrovascular diseases at 162,672 deaths.

So What Can We Do?

There are many things that can be done to help reduce your risks. Simple things like maintaining a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains and drinking plenty of purified or bottled water are vital to a healthy lifestyle. It is also important to avoid known toxins, such as tobacco, excessive alcohol, trans-fats and chemical food additives. Try to buy as much of your food as possible from organic and free-range sources.

Regular exercise is also an important part of maintaining a healthy body.