

# Ontario Cancer Statistics 2024

## Key Findings

Need this information in an accessible format?

1-877-280-8538, TTY 1-800-855-0511, [info@ontariohealth.ca](mailto:info@ontariohealth.ca).

Document disponible en français en contactant [info@ontariohealth.ca](mailto:info@ontariohealth.ca). CQP-31910



**Ontario  
Health**

# Cancer Incidence

Cancer is common in Ontario. Nearly one out of every two people (43.7%) is expected to develop cancer in their lifetime, with a slightly higher likelihood for males (45.1%) than for females (42.6%).



**49,923**  
MALES

**47,270**  
FEMALES

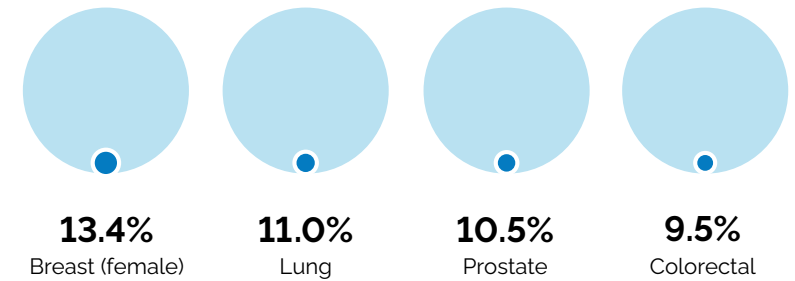
**97,193**

New cancer cases expected in 2024

## Current Estimates

In 2024:

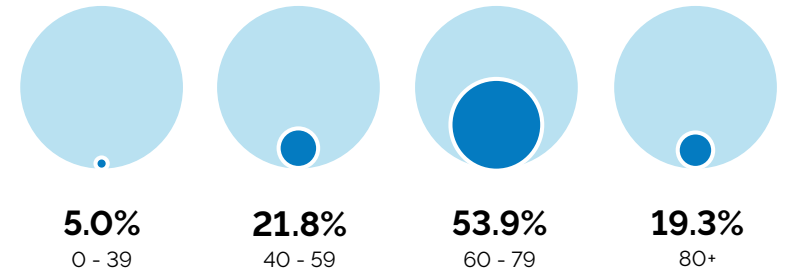
- An estimated 266 new cancer cases are expected to be diagnosed every day
- Breast (female), lung, prostate and colorectal cancers will continue to account for almost half of all new cancer cases diagnosed (44.4%)
- The greatest number of new cancer cases continues to be expected in people ages 60 to 79 (56.8%), while the rate of new cancer cases will be highest in people age 80 and older (2,445.5 per 100,000 people)



MOST COMMONLY DIAGNOSED CANCERS (2024)

## Recent Statistics

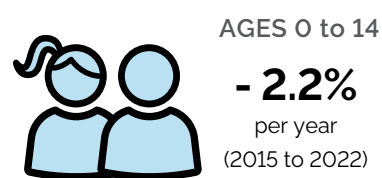
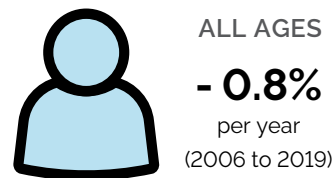
- In 2020, 78,772 new cancer cases were diagnosed with a higher rate<sup>1</sup> occurring in males (508.4 cases per 100,000 people) than in females (463.4 cases per 100,000 people)
- From 2018 to 2020, the median age at cancer diagnosis was 68 and in 2020, more than half of all diagnoses were in people ages 60 to 79



DISTRIBUTION OF NEW CANCER CASES BY AGE GROUP (2020)

## Trends Over Time

In recent years, age-standardized incidence rates<sup>1</sup> for all cancers combined have been decreasing for all ages (since 2006) and in children (since 2015)



Within the last decade:

- The age-standardized incidence rates<sup>1</sup> have been decreasing for colorectal and lung cancers, and stable for breast (female) and prostate cancers

Cervical, kidney, oral cavity and pharynx, testicular and uterine (mainly endometrial) cancers had significantly increasing age-standardized incidence rates<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Age-standardized rate was standardized to the age distribution of the 2011 Canadian Standard population.

These statistics do not include non-melanoma (basal cell and squamous cell) skin cancers.

# Cancer Mortality

Cancer is the leading cause of all deaths in Ontario (25.9%). Nearly one out of every four people (24.4%) is expected to die of cancer, with males having a greater likelihood of dying (26.5%) than females (22.5%).



**16,619**  
MALES

**14,959**  
FEMALES

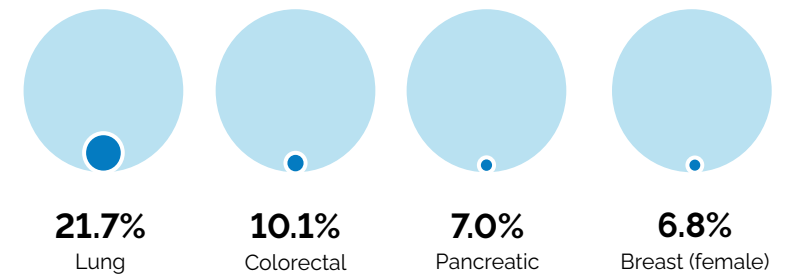
**31,575**

Cancer deaths expected in 2024

## Current Estimates

In 2024:

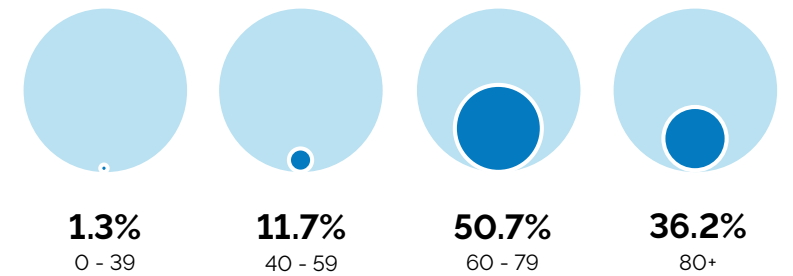
- An estimated 87 cancer deaths are expected every day
- Lung cancer will continue to account for the greatest percentage of cancer deaths (21.7%)
- People ages 60 to 79 will continue to account for the greatest number of cancer deaths (52.1%), while the rate of cancer deaths will be highest in people age 80 years and older (1,523.9 per 100,000 people)



LEADING CAUSES OF CANCER DEATHS (2024)

## Recent Statistics

- In 2020, 30,054 people died from cancer, at a significantly higher rate<sup>2</sup> occurring in males (208.1 per 100,000 people) than in females (153.8 per 100,000 people)
- From 2018 to 2020, the median age at death for cancer was 75 and in 2020, about half (50.7%) of all cancer deaths were in people ages 60 to 79



DISTRIBUTION OF CANCER DEATHS BY AGE GROUP (2020)

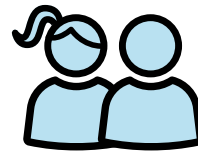
## Trends Over Time

- Age-standardized mortality rates<sup>2</sup> have been decreasing for all ages (since 1986) and in children (since 1991).



ALL AGES

- 0.6% per year (1986 to 2001)  
- 1.5% per year (2001 to 2020)



AGES 0 to 14

- 1.3% per year (1991 to 2021)

Within the last decade:

- Age-standardized mortality rates<sup>2</sup> for breast (female), colorectal, lung and prostate cancers have been steadily decreasing

Pancreatic and uterine cancers had significantly increasing age-standardized mortality rates<sup>2</sup>



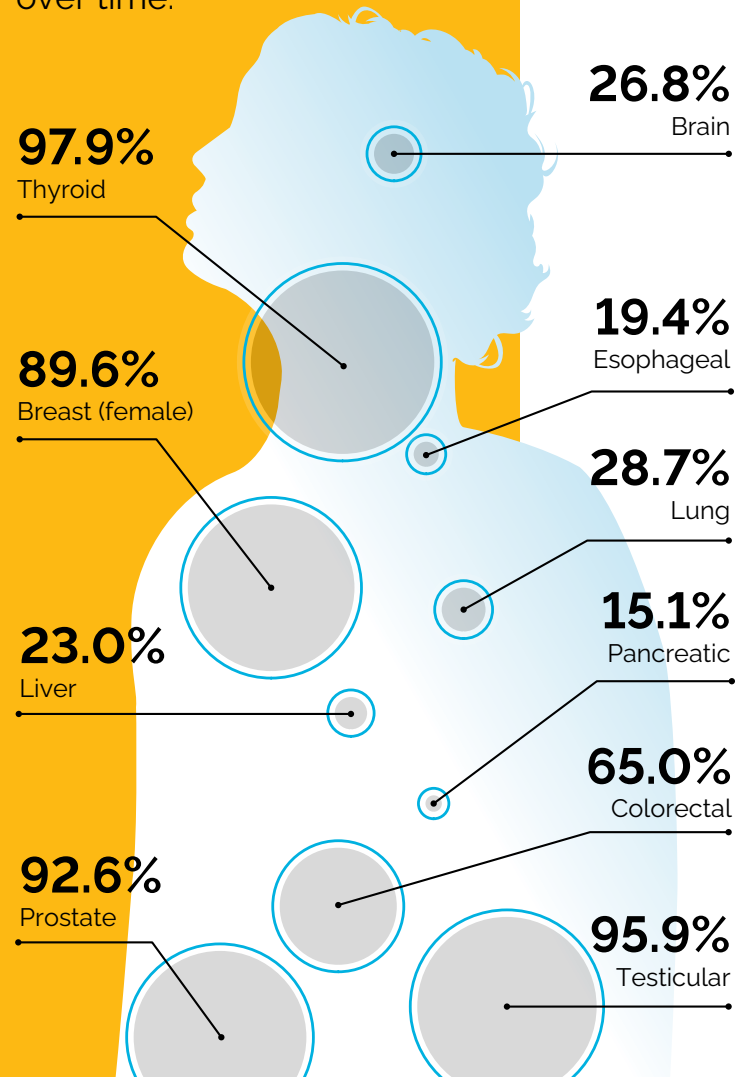
<sup>2</sup> Age-standardized rate was standardized to the age distribution of the 2011 Canadian Standard population.

These statistics do not include non-melanoma (basal cell and squamous cell) skin cancers.

# Cancer Survival

Cancer survival in Ontario continues to improve.

However, the rate of improvement has slowed over time.



Relative survival ratio (RSR) refers to the **likelihood of surviving** a certain amount of time after a cancer diagnosis compared with similar people in the general population.

## Trends Over Time

- Adults ages 40 to 59 showed the greatest improvement in survival over time, with their five-year RSR rising from 57.4 per cent (1986 to 1990) to 78.7 per cent (2016 to 2020)
- Children<sup>3</sup> with cancer continued to experience gains in survival,<sup>4</sup> from 76.0 per cent (1987 to 1991) to 86.3 per cent (2017 to 2021)
- For cancers diagnosed from 1986 to 2020, the changes in survival<sup>5</sup> varied by cancer type

## Follow-up Duration

- As of 2020, for most cancer types, survival decreases with increasing time after diagnosis

FIVE-YEAR RSR FOR SELECTED CANCERS (2016 to 2020)

<sup>3</sup> Children ages zero to 14 years.

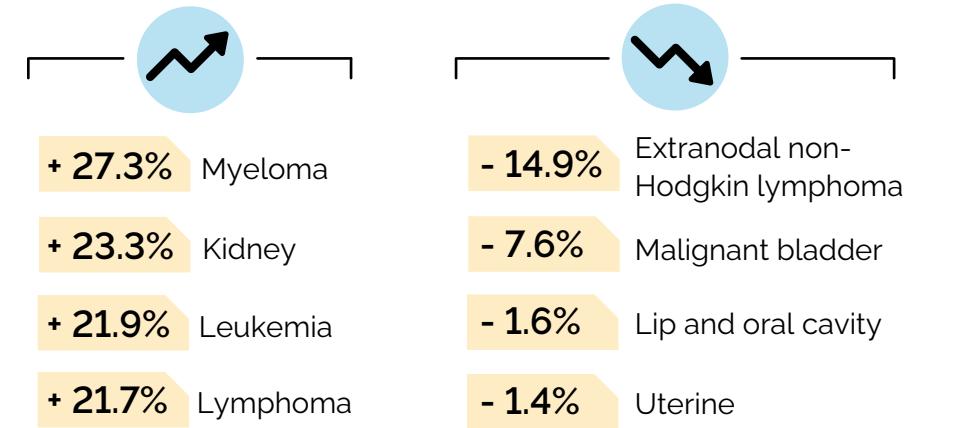
<sup>4</sup> Survival = Five-year overall survival proportion, an estimate of the probability of surviving all causes of death.

<sup>5</sup> Age-standardized five-year relative survival ratios, standardized using the International Cancer Survival Standards.

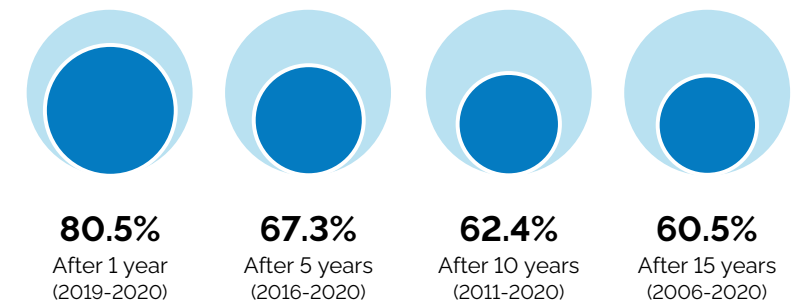
## Recent Statistics

For cancers diagnosed from 2016 to 2020, the five-year RSR:

- Was 67.3 per cent for all cancers combined
- Was higher in females (69.7%) than males (64.9%)
- Decreased with advancing age, from 88.7 per cent (ages 15 to 39) to 44.9 per cent (ages 80 to 99)



LARGEST PERCENTAGE POINT CHANGES IN FIVE-YEAR RSR<sup>5</sup> (1986 to 2020)



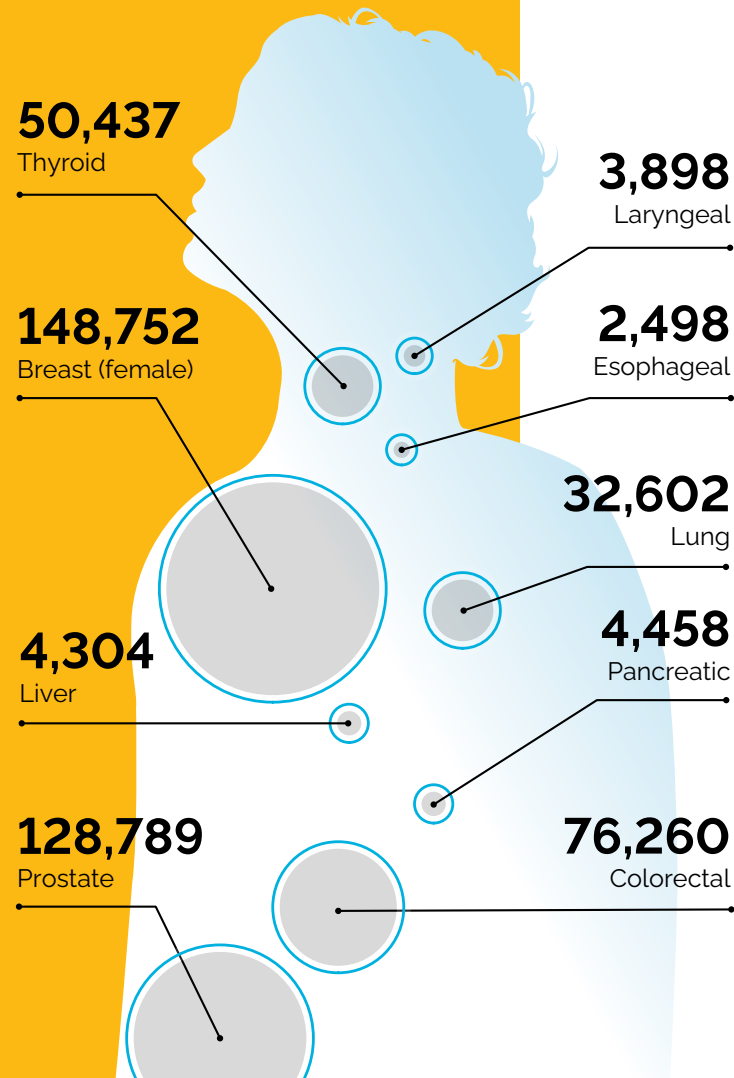
RSR FOR ALL CANCERS COMBINED BY DURATION (as of 2020)

These statistics do not include non-melanoma (basal cell and squamous cell) skin cancers.



# Cancer Prevalence

In Ontario, there are now more people living with a cancer diagnosis than there were 20 years ago.



Cancer prevalence refers to **the number of people** newly and previously diagnosed with cancer who are still alive at a given point in time. Therefore, prevalence is a function of cancer incidence and survival, and increases with higher incidence and improving survival.

## Recent Statistics

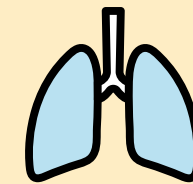
By the end of **2020**, more than half a million people had been diagnosed with cancer in the previous **30 years** and were still alive. Of those:

- 419,355 people were diagnosed in the last **10 years** alone
- There were more females (54.1%) than males (45.9%)
- The majority (52.7%) were people ages 60 to 79
- Females with breast cancer were the largest group, accounting for 148,752 survivors



**705,654**

people are still alive who were diagnosed with cancer in the previous **30 years**



Despite being the second most commonly diagnosed cancer, lung cancer is the eighth most prevalent cancer (**30-year**) because of its low survival

## Trends Over Time

Among major cancer types, **10-year** prevalence counts increased each decade from **2000 to 2020** for most cancers, but it changed very little or decreased for the following:



Cervical



Bladder (females)



Malignant brain (females)



Laryngeal



Prostate

◀ NUMBER OF 30-YEAR PREVALENT CASES FOR SELECTED CANCERS (2020)

These statistics do not include non-melanoma (basal cell and squamous cell) skin cancers.

# COVID-19 and Cancer

The COVID-19 pandemic led to disruptions in cancer care in Ontario, impacting the patterns and trends in cancer incidence, mortality and survival.



Honestly, none of these statistical findings surprised me. I knew there was an impact. How could there not be? Our community had a lot of fear about the impacts of COVID-19 and the possibility of delayed cancer treatment or screening. These findings validated our experiences.



**Jennifer McCloskey**  
Training and Development Professional and Patient and Family Advisor living with cancer – emphasis on the living.

## Incidence

- Compared to **2019**, nearly 7 per cent fewer new cases were diagnosed in **2020**. Eighteen out of 23 cancer types examined experienced a decrease in new cases.



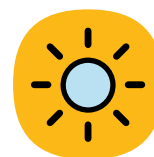
**-18.4%**  
Thyroid



**-12.1%**  
Breast (female)



**-12.0%**  
Prostate



**-11.1%**  
Melanoma

LARGEST DECREASES IN NEW CANCER CASES (2020 vs. 2019)

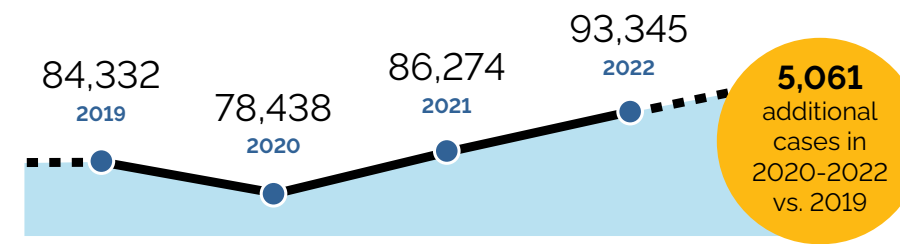
## Severity of Cancer Cases

- In **2020**, there was a slight shift from early stage at diagnosis (1 and 2) towards advanced stage (3 and 4) for female breast and colorectal cancers, compared to **2018** and **2019**
- In **2020** and **2021**, the age-standardized rate<sup>7</sup> of hospitalization among people with COVID-19 was twice as high in people with cancer<sup>6</sup> (diagnosed from 2015 to 2020)

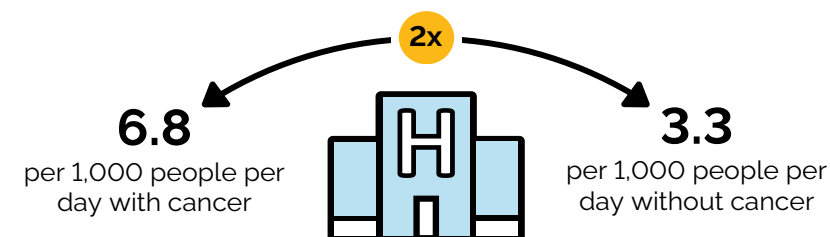
## Mortality and Survival

- In **2020**, survival decreased slightly for all cancers combined, dropping by 1.9 (1-year RSR<sup>8</sup>) and 2.5 (2-year RSR<sup>8</sup>) percentage points compared with **2019**
- In **2020** and **2021**, there were 1,860 more deaths from all causes than expected among people with cancer<sup>6</sup>

- The reduction in new cancer cases in **2020** was followed by a return to pre-pandemic levels in **2021** and a surge in **2022**<sup>6</sup>
- This increase in new cancer cases is expected to continue in future years if pre-pandemic incidence trends continue to hold



ANNUAL NEW CANCER CASES (2019 to 2022)



HOSPITALIZATION RATE AMONG PEOPLE WITH COVID-19 (2020 to 2021)



**1,860**  
excess deaths from all causes



EXCESS DEATHS AMONG PEOPLE WITH CANCER (2020 to 2021)

<sup>6</sup> The years 2021 to 2022 are provisional data and should be interpreted with caution. See the [Ontario Cancer Statistics Report](#) for more information.

<sup>7</sup> Age-standardized rate was standardized to the age distribution of the 2011 Canadian Standard population.

<sup>8</sup> Relative survival ratio.

These statistics do not include non-melanoma (basal cell and squamous cell) skin cancers.