Bowel cancer statistics

Bowel cancer in Australia

The following material has been sourced from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Bowel cancer incorporates ICD-10 cancer codes C18 (Malignant neoplasm of colon), C19 (Malignant neoplasm of rectosigmoid junction) and C20 (Malignant neoplasm of the rectum).

Projected number of new cases of bowel cancer diagnosed in 2015

17,070 = 9,550 males + 7,520 females

Projected % of all new cancer cases diagnosed in 2015

13.5%

Projected number of deaths from bowel cancer in 2015

4,120 = 2,190 males + 1,930 females

Projected % of all deaths from cancer in 2015
How common is bowel cancer?

In 2011, there were 15,151 new cases of bowel cancer diagnosed in Australia (8,351 males and 6,800 females). In 2015, it is estimated that 17,070 new cases of bowel cancer will be diagnosed in Australia (9,550 males and 7,520 females).

In 2011, the age-standardised incidence rate was 62 cases per 100,000 persons (73 for males and 52 for females). In 2015, it is estimated that the age-standardised incidence rate will be 62 cases per 100,000 persons (74 for males and 52 for females).

Bowel cancer was the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia in 2011. It is estimated that it will remain the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in 2015.

In 2015, it is estimated that the risk of an individual being diagnosed with bowel cancer by their 85th birthday will be 1 in 12 (1 in 10 males and 1 in 15 females).

In 2015, the incidence rate of bowel cancer is expected to generally increase with age (see figure below).

**Age-specific incidence rates for bowel cancer, 2015**
Bowel cancer statistics

Source: AIHW analysis of the Australian Cancer Database (unpublished), (see source data).

Projected most common cancers diagnosed in 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cancer type</th>
<th>New cases 2015</th>
<th>% of all new cancers 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prostate (among males)</td>
<td>17,250</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowel</td>
<td>17,070</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast</td>
<td>15,740</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanoma</td>
<td>12,960</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung</td>
<td>11,880</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deaths from bowel cancer

In 2012, there were 3,980 deaths from bowel cancer in Australia (2,208 males and 1,772 females). In 2015, it is estimated that this will increase to 4,120 deaths (2,190 males and 1,930 females).

In 2012, the age-standardised mortality rate was 15 deaths per 100,000 persons (19 for males and 12 for females). In 2015, it is estimated that the age-standardised mortality rate will be 15 deaths per 100,000 persons (17 for males and 13 for females).

In 2012, bowel cancer accounted for the second largest number of deaths from cancer in Australia. It is estimated that it will remain the second most common cause of death from cancer in 2015.

In 2015, it is estimated that the risk of an individual dying from bowel cancer by their 85th birthday will be 1 in 50 (1 in 43 males and 1 in 61 females).

Trends in bowel cancer

Incidence

The number of new cases of bowel cancer diagnosed increased from 6,963 in 1982 to 15,151 in 2012.
Over the same period, the age-standardised incidence rate increased from 58 per 100,000 persons in 1982 to 62 per 100,000 persons in 2011.

**Mortality**

The number of deaths from bowel cancer increased from 2,500 in 1968 to 3,980 in 2012.

Over the same period, the age-standardised mortality rate decreased from 31 deaths per 100,000 persons in 1968 to 15 deaths per 100,000 in 2012.

**Survival from bowel cancer**

In 2007–2011 in Australia, individuals with bowel cancer had a 67% chance of surviving for 5 years compared to their counterparts in the general Australian population.

Between 1982–1986 and 2007–2011, 5-year relative survival from bowel cancer improved from 47% to 67%.


**Source:** Australian Institute of Health and Welfare\(^1\)
Prevalence of bowel cancer

The prevalence for one, five and 28 years given below are the number of people living with bowel cancer at the end of 2009 who had been diagnosed in the preceding 1, 5 and 28 years respectively.

One year prevalence
At the end of 2009, there were 12,330 people living who had been diagnosed with bowel cancer that year.

Five year prevalence
At the end of 2009, there were 48,596 people living who had been diagnosed with bowel cancer in the previous 5 years (from 2005 to 2009).

28 year prevalence
At the end of 2009, there were 114,295 people living who had been diagnosed with bowel cancer in the previous 28 years (from 1982 to 2009).

Source tables

Source table 1: Incidence of bowel cancer by age group, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group (years)</th>
<th>Number of new cases per 100,000 people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group (years)</td>
<td>Number of new cases per 100,000 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–19</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20–24</td>
<td></td>
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<td>25–29</td>
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<td>30–34</td>
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<td>35–39</td>
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<td>40–44</td>
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<td>45–49</td>
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<td>50–54</td>
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<td>55–59</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>60–64</td>
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<tr>
<td>65–69</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>70–74</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>75–79</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>80–84</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>85+</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source table 2: 5-year relative survival from bowel cancer, 1982–86 to 2007–11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>5-year relative survival (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982–86</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987–91</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992–96</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997–01</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002–06</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007–11</td>
<td>66.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data notes**

*International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems Version 10 (ICD-10)*

Cancer, like other health conditions, is classified by the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems Version 10* (ICD-10). This is a statistical classification, published by the [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int), in which each morbid condition is assigned a unique code according to established criteria.

**Projections**
Future projections for incidence and mortality are a mathematical extrapolation of past trends. They assume that the most recent trends will continue into the future, and are intended to illustrate future changes that might reasonably be expected to occur if the stated assumptions continue to apply over the projected period. Actual future cancer incidence and mortality rates may vary from these projections for a variety of factors. New screening programs may increase the detection of new cancer cases; new vaccination programs may decrease the risk of developing cancer; and improvements in treatment options may decrease mortality rates.

**Incidence**

Cancer incidence indicates the number of new cancers diagnosed during a specified time period (usually one year).

- a. The 2011 national incidence counts include estimates for NSW and the ACT because the real data were not available.
- b. The 2015 estimates are based on 2002–11 incidence data.

**Mortality**

Cancer mortality refers to the number of deaths occurring during a specified time period (usually one year) for which the underlying cause of death is cancer.

- c. The 2015 estimates are based on 2002–12 mortality data. Due to the rounding of these estimates, male and female mortality may not sum to person mortality.

**Prevalence**

Prevalence of cancer refers to the number of people alive with a prior diagnosis of cancer at a given time. It is distinct from incidence, which is the number of new cancers diagnosed within a given period of time.

**Age standardised rates**

- d. Incidence and mortality rates expressed per 100,000 population are age-standardised to the Australian population as at 30 June 2001.

**References**

6. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2015. Australian Cancer Incidence and Mortality (ACIM) Books: All Cancers combined (ICD10 C00-C97, D45-46, D47.1, D47.3).
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Published on Cancer Australia
(https://canceraustralia.gov.au)