



ADULT CANCER

FACT SHEETS ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT IN WASHINGTON

INTRODUCTION

Cancer is the leading cause of death for Americans under the age of 85 years. Almost half of all men and one-third of all women in the US will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetimes.¹

The five most common cancers associated with environmental contaminants are breast (female), lung, melanoma, bladder, and non-Hodgkins lymphoma.²

Breast cancer rates in the US have tripled since the 1960s. One in seven American women will now be diagnosed with breast cancer.³

Other cancers linked with the environment include bone, brain, cervical, esophageal, laryngeal, leukemia, liver, angiosarcoma, multiple myeloma, Hodgkin's lymphoma, oral, pancreatic, renal (kidney), salivary gland, skin (non-melanoma), scrotal and thyroid cancer.

PROPORTION OF ADULT CANCERS DUE TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINANTS

Most cancers are caused by a variety of different factors, including genetics, lifestyle, diet and environmental factors.

The World Health Organization has estimated that in the developed world, 16% of cancers in men and 13% of cancers in women, excluding lung cancer, are due to the environment.⁴

ADULT CANCER IN WASHINGTON STATE

- Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Washington state and the leading cause of death among adults aged 45-74 years. About one of every four deaths each year in the state is from cancer.⁵
- In 2002, 10,840 Washington residents died of cancer, and 31,119 people were diagnosed. About one in three Washingtonians will be diagnosed with cancer in his or her lifetime.⁶

- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death.⁷
- The five most common types of cancer reported among Washington residents are breast, prostate, lung, colorectal and melanoma.⁸ Melanoma, lung and breast cancer are linked with environmental contaminants.⁹
- The table below compares cancer incidence rates in Washington state for men and women with rates in the Puget Sound region.¹⁰ It shows that rates around Puget Sound are higher than in the rest of the state.

	Year	WA State Cancer Incidence Rate per 100,000	Seattle-Puget Sound Cancer Incidence Rate per 100,000
Females	2001	446.1	451.5
Males	2001	571.7	578.8

- The table below shows the 2002 age-adjusted incidence and death rates in Washington state for the five most common cancers linked with environmental contaminants.^{11,12} It shows that breast cancer is the most common cancer in Washington, although the death rate for lung and bronchial cancer is higher.

Washington State Cancer Incidence and Death Rates, 2002			
Type of Cancer	WA Incidence Rate per 100,000	Death Rate per 100,000	WA County with Highest Incidence, 2000-2002
Breast (female)	181.4	23.7	Garfield
Lung and Bronchus	67.1	55.0	Grays Harbor
Melanoma	37.6	2.7	Island
Bladder	23.8	4.1	Pend Oreille
Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma	21.8	8.7	Walla Walla

- King County's rate of breast cancer is lower than the statewide rate, with 157 cases per 100,000 women.
- Breast cancer incidence rates statewide are higher among whites, but death rates are higher among blacks.¹³

COMPARING WASHINGTON STATE NATIONALLY

- In 2004, the national cancer death rate was 199.8 per 100,000 people and Washington's rate was slightly lower at 195.3.¹⁴
- Washington state has the highest incidence rate of breast cancer in the country. National and state incidence rates for the five most common cancers linked with environmental contaminants are shown in the table below.¹⁵ Data are age-adjusted per 100,000 population.

National and State Cancer Incidence Rates, 2002				
Cancer Type	US Incidence Rate	Lowest State Incidence Rate	Highest State Incidence Rate	WA State Incidence Rate
Breast	124.9	109.0 (WV)	147.8 (WA)	147.8
Lung	67.5	28.7 (UT)	98.4 (KY)	67.5
Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma	18.4	15.1 (HI)	22.1 (MN)	21.8
Melanoma	16.6	7.6 (DC)	27.2 (NH)	21.5
Bladder	21.0	13.9 (DC)	29.0 (NH)	23.8

- Cancer in Washington state caused by environmental exposures costs about \$203.5 million annually.¹⁶ Cancer in the US from all causes cost about \$209.9 billion in 2004.¹⁷
- The Washington State Cancer Registry was awarded an "A" grade by the Trust for America's Health, one of only 12 states to receive this rating.¹⁸

SOURCES

- 1 http://www.healthandenvironment.org/wg_cancer_news/216
- 2 <http://database.healthandenvironment.org/>
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- 4 http://www.who.int/quantifying_ehimpacts/publications/preventingdisease/en/index.html
- 5 http://www.doh.wa.gov/CCC/pdf/WSCCC_plan.pdf
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