Chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes, are among the most common, costly and preventable illnesses. About seven out of ten deaths in the United States each year are due to a chronic disease. In addition, the long course of illness for some chronic diseases results in activity limitations and pain, decreasing the quality of life for millions of Americans. Healthy behaviors, such as eating nutritious foods, engaging in physical activity, and avoiding tobacco use can prevent much chronic disease and control its complications.

**Cancer**

- About half of Minnesotans will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime and about one-fourth will die from cancer.
- Cancer caused 24 percent of the deaths in Dakota County residents in 2017, making it the leading cause of death.
- Four types of cancer (lung, breast, prostate, and colorectal) account for the majority of cancer in both genders.
- In Dakota County, the rate of all new cancer cases decreased from 2003 to 2013, and was similar to the statewide rate for the period 2011-2015. The rate of new breast cancer cases in Dakota County women increased from 2003 to 2013 and was above the statewide rate for the period 2011-2015.
- Seventy-six percent of Minnesota women over age 40 had a mammogram in the past two years (2016). 73.5 percent of Minnesotans aged 50-75 were screened for colon cancer (2016).
- In Dakota County, the rate of new melanoma cases increased by 72 percent from 2003 to 2013. One percent of Dakota County 9th grade females and four percent of 11th grade females reported they had used an indoor tanning device three or more times in the previous year (2016), a decrease from 2013. A 2014 Minnesota law now prohibits persons under 18 from using commercial indoor tanning facilities.
Heart disease and stroke

- Heart disease and stroke accounted for 21 percent of deaths in Dakota County residents in 2017; heart disease is the second and stroke is the fifth leading cause of death.
- The heart disease death rate decreased from 2007 to 2016. It was below the state rate for 2015–2017.
- The stroke death rate steadily decreased from 2007 to 2016. It was below the state rate for 2015–2017.
- Twenty-nine percent of Dakota County adults (25 and older) said they had ever been told they had high blood pressure, an increase from 2010, 34 percent said they had ever been told they had high cholesterol (2014).

Alzheimer’s Disease

- Alzheimer’s disease was tied with unintentional injuries for the third leading cause of death in Dakota County residents in 2017, causing seven percent of the deaths.
- The Alzheimer’s death rate increased from 2007 to 2016 and was above the state rate for 2015–2017.
- In 2018, it was estimated that 94,000 Minnesotans had Alzheimer’s disease. This is expected to increase by 28 percent to 120,000 in 2025.

Chronic lower respiratory disease

- Chronic lower respiratory disease (asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema) was the fourth leading cause of death in Dakota County residents in 2017, causing six percent of the deaths.
- Thirteen percent of Dakota County adults (25 and older) said they had ever been told they had asthma. Eight percent still had asthma (2014).
- There were 321 hospitalizations and 1,995 emergency room visits for asthma for Dakota County residents in 2015-2016. The highest rate of hospitalizations for asthma was in children ages 1–4.
- In 2016, 13 percent of Dakota County 5th graders, 17.5 percent of 8th graders, and 18.5 percent of 9th graders, and 19 percent of 11th graders said a doctor or nurse had ever told them they had asthma, slightly higher than the state for 8th and 9th graders, below the state for 11th graders, and similar to the state for 5th graders.

Diabetes

- Diabetes was the sixth leading cause of death in Dakota County residents in 2017, causing 2.5 percent of deaths.
- In 2014, ten percent of Dakota County adults (25 and older) reported ever being told they had diabetes (Type 1 or 2).

Disabilities

- An estimated 40 million American adults have a disability, including physical or mental limitations and hearing or vision impairment.
- In 2017, an estimated nine percent of Dakota County residents over age five years who were not institutionalized had a disability. This was below the state (11 percent) and the U.S. (13 percent) rates.
- Persons 65 and older were the most likely to have a disability (29 percent in 2017).
- Twenty percent of Dakota County adults (25 and older) were ever told they had arthritis (2014), the leading cause of disability.

For more information:
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- Minnesota Department of Health [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)
- Alzheimer’s Association [www.alz.org/mnnd](http://www.alz.org/mnnd)
- American Cancer Society [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)
- American Heart Association [https://www2.heart.org](https://www2.heart.org)

The Dakota County Public Health Department is accredited by the national Public Health Accreditation Board. For more information about the Dakota County community health assessment, email public.health@co.dakota.mn.us or call 651.554.6100.