

The Health of the State: living and dying in Arkansas

Birth rates in Arkansas have, like those across the rest of the United States, generally declined since the mid-

20th century, reflecting a trend toward smaller families, begun later in the parents' life.

Year	# of births	# per 1,000 population
1950	45,699	23.4
1970	35,457	18.4
1990	36,440	15.5
1999	36,670	14.4

County with most births, 1999: Pulaski (5,513; rate per 1,000: 15.25)

County with fewest births, 1999: Calhoun (54; rate per 1,000: 9.4)

Births to Mothers less than 20 years old, 1980-1999

Year	# of births	% of total births in state
1980	8036	21.5
1990	7174	19.68
1999	6526	17.06

Mortality

year	# of deaths	rate (# per 100,000 pop.)	rate, non-whites
1950	15,301	881.3	1,006.1
1970	20,668	1,074.6	1,211.6
1990	24,588	1,046	1,035.4
1999	27,934	1,094.9	937.8

The Arkansas Way(s) of Death

Heart attacks, cancers and strokes lead the pack of Arkansans' mortal enemies. A relatively high rating for accidents and adverse effects may reflect Arkansan enjoyment of high-risk behaviors; anecdotal evidence points to lax workplace and recreational safety as contributing factors to the high "accidents" toll. On the other hand, Arkansans commit suicide at a markedly lower rate than does the nation at large.

Leading Causes of Death in Arkansas, 1998, ranked, with national rankings for comparison.

Cause of Death	AR total	rank	rank, national
Heart disease	8,431	1	1
Malignancies (cancers)	5,950	2	2
Cerebrovascular (stroke)	2,344	3	3
Accidents/adverse effects	1,296	4	6
Chronic Pulmonary	1,236	5	4
Pneumonia/Influenza	1,096	6	5
Diabetes mellitus	644	7	7
Kidney diseases	393	8	9
Septicæmia	358	9	11
Suicide	344	10	8
Homicide/"Legal" Interv	232	11	13
Alzheimer's Disease	231	12	12
Liver disease/cirrhosis	203	13	10
Atherosclerosis	150	14	14
Perinatal conditions	127	15	(not in top 15)
Hypertension	125	(not top 15)	15
All other causes	4,292		