

# HEALTH REPORT

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## LIFE EXPECTANCY IS UP IN US BY ALMOST 10 YEARS OVER 1955

Life expectancy continues to rise in the United States! Now, a child born in 2005 can expect to live until almost 78 years.

This continues the rising trend of life expectancy in the United States over the past 50 years. Back in 1955, the life expectancy for Americans was only 69.6 years. By 1995, it had increased to 75.8 years. Now, for 2005, life expectancy is up again over just a decade ago to 77.9 years.

These figures are compiled by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) of the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. It is based on approximately 99 percent of death records reported in all 50 states and the District of Columbia for 2005. This research documents the latest trends and the leading cause of death and infant mortality rate.

“This report highlights the continued reduction in deaths from the three leading killers in the United States – heart disease, cancer and stroke – which is most likely due to better prevention efforts and medical advances in the treatments of these diseases,” said Hsiang-Ching Kung, a survey statistician with NCHS and one of the report’s authors. “If death rates from certain leading causes of death continue to decline, we should continue to see improvements in life expectancy.”

Several statistics were of particular interest in the report. The life expectancy for the white population is a bit higher than for African Americans. Whites can expect to live 78.3 years, while the expectation for African Americans is 73.2 years. While deaths from the top 3 killers – heart attack, cancer and stroke – dropped, deaths from Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s Disease both increased by approximately 5% in 2005 over 2004 totals. Alzheimer’s is the 7th leading cause of death and Parkinson’s ranks 14th.

Increasingly, individuals and the companies they work for are pointing in the direction of taking full advantage of health and wellness programs. A higher awareness of the benefits of a proper diet, reduced smoking, vitamin intake and exercise can all contribute to longevity and to putting more life in people’s years. With more public utilization of good health programs, attention to personal fitness and wise choices offered through alternative medical treatment, it may take only a couple more decades for life expectancy to top the 80 year old mark.