



Why We're Here: The Health of Northern Ireland in Numbers

This breakdown of the most up-to-date available statistics on chest, heart and stroke conditions in Northern Ireland demonstrates just why our care, prevention, research and campaigning work is so vital.

In the adult population

Approximately 600,000 people are living with a chest, heart or stroke condition



This means around 4 in 10 of adults live with CHS conditions (40%)

This is made up of around 400,000 people who have a chest, heart or stroke diagnosis (about 1 in 3) and approximately 200,000 living with undiagnosed conditions



#1 cause of death

Deaths due to chest, heart and stroke conditions were the #1 cause of death in 2024

Cause of death

1	All cancers	4,881	27.0%
2	Circulatory	4,561	25.3%
3	Respiratory	2,255	12.5%
	Combined	6,816	37.8%



38% of all deaths

About 4 in 10 deaths were due to CHS conditions



19 deaths per day

(6,816 each year) are caused by chest, heart and stroke conditions combined

Coronary heart disease is the main cause of circulatory death

COPD is the main cause of respiratory death

	CHD		COPD
Number	1,228	Number	972
% all deaths	6.8%	% all deaths	5.4%
% category	26.9%	% category	43.1%

For references and more info, visit www.nichs.org.uk/statistics

Circulatory Conditions

Any conditions that affect your heart or blood vessels.



Approximately 500,000 adults are living with circulatory conditions



12 deaths every day (4,416 in 2024)



112 hospital admissions every day (40,864 in 2025)

10 people every day were admitted to hospital in 2025 because of heart attacks (3,721)

704 people died from heart attacks in 2024 (2 a day)

75,974 people have a diagnosis of Coronary Heart Disease. Many more are undiagnosed

23,082 people have a diagnosis of Heart Failure. Many more are undiagnosed

Coronary Heart Disease is the biggest single cause of premature deaths (in people younger than 75) across NI

239 calls a day are received by the ambulance service for people who have a cardiac arrest (OHCA). Most of these people died.

Women and Heart Disease



4 in 10 heart attack deaths were females in 2024

2x

Heart disease killed **more than twice as many** women in NI as cervix, uterus, ovary and breast cancer combined in 2024 (1,175 vs 524)



Nearly twice as many women **died from Coronary Heart Disease than breast cancer** in 2024 (592 vs 286)

During and after menopause, a woman's body gradually produces less oestrogen. This increases the risk of the coronary arteries narrowing, and this increases your risk of developing Coronary Heart Disease, or a circulatory condition such as stroke.

Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)



299,896 people or **20% of the adult population** have a diagnosis of high blood pressure



Around 120,000 have undiagnosed high blood pressure... maybe more



When those diagnosed and undiagnosed are combined, **around 1 in 3 of the adult population** have high blood pressure



Hypertension is the **#1 cause of stroke**

Stroke & TIA

When the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off.

A transient ischaemic attack (TIA) or “mini stroke” is caused by a temporary disruption in the blood supply to part of the brain.



42,531 people
have a stroke or
TIA diagnosis



About 2 deaths
every day
(883 in 2024)



9 people had a
stroke every day
(3,170 people in 2024)

In 2025:

About half (51%) of stroke survivors
were <75

4 in 10 (39%) were <69

1 in 4 (25%) had a prior stroke

Almost 6 in 10 had hypertension
before their stroke

About 1 in 5 had AF before their stroke

1 in 4 (26%) were diagnosed with
type 2 diabetes

Respiratory Conditions

Any disease that affects the lungs and airways.



Approximately 220,000 are
living with respiratory conditions



6 deaths every day
(2,316 in 2024)



83 hospital admissions
every day (30,285 in 2025)

44,207 people are diagnosed with
COPD. Many more are undiagnosed

It killed 921 people in 2024
(more than 2 per day)

135,771 people are diagnosed with
asthma. Many more are undiagnosed

It killed 52 people in 2024

Air Pollution

About 300-350
cardiovascular deaths
across NI each year can
be linked to air pollution



Chest
Heart &
Stroke

Atrial Fibrillation

A type of irregular heartbeat which can increase your risk of stroke by up to five times.



48,799 people have a diagnosis of Atrial Fibrillation (AF)



Around 12,000 people may have undetected AF



8 hospital admissions every day (2,790 hospital admissions in 2025)



People with AF are at **greater risk of stroke** and their stroke is **more likely to be severe**



20% - 30% of all strokes are attributed to AF



30% - 40% of people will not know that they have AF until they have a stroke

Deprivation and Inequality

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is one of the conditions most strongly associated with health inequalities. **In NI, people living in the most deprived areas (compared to the least deprived) are...**



Up to 30% more likely to die early from CVD depending on where you live



Preventable deaths in the most deprived areas are **three times higher** than the least deprived areas



People in our most deprived areas are **3.5 times more likely to die** from a lung condition before they turn 75



People in our most deprived areas are **2.5 times more likely to die** from a circulatory condition before they turn 75



People in the most deprived areas **die younger** than those from the least deprived



Disability starts **a decade earlier** in the most deprived areas



More likely to be taking medication for high blood pressure and cholesterol

Health and Lifestyle



SMOKING

Smoking is the single greatest cause of preventable illness and premature death in Northern Ireland, killing around 2,200 people in 2023/24.

- 12%** of people currently smoke
- 1 in 10** women smoke during pregnancy
- 5%** of Year 8-14 pupils currently smoke
- 17%** of 16-34 year olds currently smoke

Smoking robs 10 – 15 years of healthy life.



ALCOHOL

397 deaths in 2024 due to alcohol consumption



DIET

56% of adults didn't get 5+ portions of fruit and veg a day in 2025



E-CIGS

- 9%** of people currently use e-cigs (2025)
- 20%** of 11-18 year olds have tried an e-cigarette
- 15%** of 11-18 year olds currently vape



OBESITY

1 in 4 P1 children are overweight or obese

67% of adults
27% of Year 8 pupils and **1 in 3** 2-10 year olds are overweight or obese

45% of adults are not getting the recommended amount of physical activity

Children in NI have the lowest physical activity levels in the UK



ACTIVITY

Only **17%** of children meet the recommended 60 minutes of daily activity

Primary school children are **sedentary 5 hrs a day** and post-primary students **7 hrs a day**

A third of 11-16 year olds (34%) spend 10+ hours watching screens during school days. This rises to nearly two thirds (64%) at weekends and holidays

32% played video games multiple times a day

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