



AS IT IS

U.S. Likely to Have More Deaths in 2021 than in 2020

December 28, 2021

The United States counted the most deaths ever in 2020.

However, **statistics** from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predict the number of deaths in 2021 will be even larger than in 2020.

Robert Anderson keeps track of deaths for the CDC.

He said when the numbers from November and December come in early next year, the deaths will be higher by about 15,000.

The CDC numbers include all deaths, including those from natural causes like old age, plus accidents like car crashes or drug **overdoses**.

Anderson said the deaths from COVID-19 in 2020 reached about 351,000. This year, however, the new coronavirus could be responsible for about 370,000 deaths.

COVID-19 is the nation's number three cause of death, behind heart disease and cancer.

Experts also think the U.S. will set a record in 2021 for drug overdose deaths. The number is expected to be more than 100,000 for the first time.

Death statistics often increase from year to year. For example, there was an increase of 16,000 from 2018 to 2019.

However, the number of deaths in the last two years rose **sharply** because of COVID-19.

Kenneth Johnson studies deaths at the University of New Hampshire. He said the U.S. had its smallest population gain in history between July 2020 and July 2021 because of the pandemic.

When vaccines became widely available in the U.S. partway through 2021, officials hoped the number of deaths would slow.

However, because many Americans are still not vaccinated, people are still dying. The CDC says only about 65 percent of the **eligible** U.S. population is vaccinated.

Ali Mokdad studies deaths at the University of Washington. He said the combination of new, easier-to-spread versions of COVID-19 plus the large number of unvaccinated people made the number of deaths higher than expected in 2021.

I'm Dan Friedell.

Dan Friedell wrote this story for Learning English based on a report from the Associated Press. Susan Shand was the editor.

Do you think the death total changed by a lot in your country? Tell us in the Comments Section and visit our Facebook page.

Words in This Story

statistic – n. a number that represents a piece of information

overdose – n. an amount of a drug or medicine that is too much and usually dangerous

sharply – adv. suddenly and by a large amount

eligible – adj. able to be chosen for something : able to do or receive something