



Cancer on the Blackfeet Reservation

CANCER BURDEN FACTS

This fact sheet provides information describing the burden of cancer among American Indians living on or near the Blackfeet Reservation. American Indian residents of Glacier and Pondera Counties were used to estimate the burden of cancer on the Blackfeet Reservation.

- **373 American Indians on the Blackfeet Reservation were diagnosed with cancer from 2012–2021. Therefore, there are on average 37 new cases of cancer each year.**
- **Cancer incidence on the Blackfeet Reservation counties was not statistically different among American Indian and White residents (Figure 1).**
- **Five (5) kinds of cancer account for 60% of all cancers that occur among American Indians on the Blackfeet Reservation (Figure 2).**
- **Significantly more cases of lung, colorectal, and kidney cancer were diagnosed in American Indians on the Blackfeet Reservation than would be expected if the rate were the same as White residents in the region. There were significantly fewer cases of prostate cancer (Figure 2).**
- **150 American Indians on the Blackfeet Reservation died because of cancer from 2012–2021. That is on average 15 deaths a year.**

Montana Cancer Control Programs

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[https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/Cancer/
DataStatistics](https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/Cancer/DataStatistics)



Figure 1: All-site cancer incidence (new cases) rates among **American Indian** residents compared to **White** residents, Montana, 2012–2021

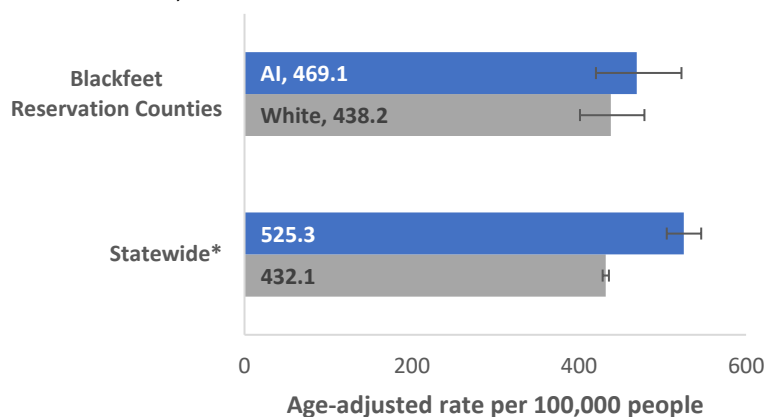
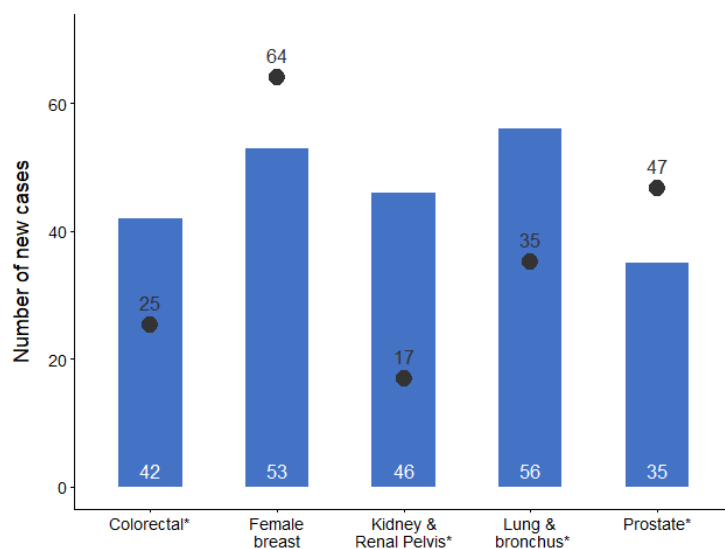


Figure 2: **Observed** compared to **expected (●)** number of new cases of cancer by cancer site among American Indian residents of the Blackfeet Reservation counties, 2012–2021



Source: MT Tumor Registry

*Statistically significantly different ($p < 0.05$)



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- **Cancer mortality on the Blackfeet Reservation was greater than among White Montanans statewide although cancer mortality was not statistically different between American Indian and White residents of the Blackfeet reservation counties (Figure 3).**

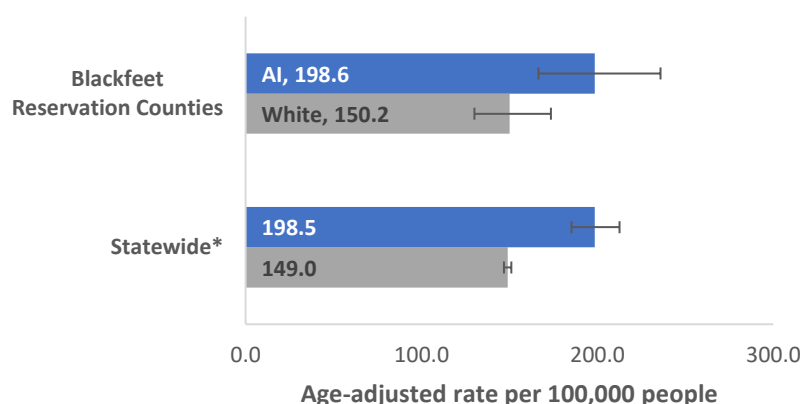
Key facts about cancer prevention and early detection

- **More than half (58%) of Montana American Indian adults have been screened for colorectal cancer. This was lower than the percentage of White Montanans (Figure 4).**
- **Obesity was also high among Montana American Indians (Figure 5). Obesity increases the risk of several types of cancer including breast, colorectal, and kidney cancers.**
- **Percent of American Indian adults who report themselves as a current cigarette smoker fell from 31% in 2021 to 25% in 2023 (Figure 5). This indicates an important, positive trend, which must continue as smoking greatly increases a person's risk for getting at least 13 types of cancer, including lung, colorectal, and kidney. Smoking among Montana American Indians remains higher than in White Montanans (Figure 5).**

†Women aged 50+ who have had a mammogram within the past two years were up to date on breast cancer screening; women aged 21-65 years who have had a pap test within the past three years were up to date on cervical cancer screening; men and women aged 50-75 who have had colonoscopy in the past 10 years, flexible sigmoidoscopy in the past 5 years, or a blood stool test in the past 1 year were up to date on colorectal cancer screening.

¹Colorectal and Breast data are from 2022, cervical cancer data is from 2020

Figure 3: All-site cancer mortality rates among **American Indian** residents compared to **White** residents, Montana, 2012—2021



Source: MT Vital Statistics

Figure 4: Percent of adults who are up to date† on Colorectal, Cervical, and Breast Cancer screening among **American Indian** residents compared to **White** residents, Montana¹.

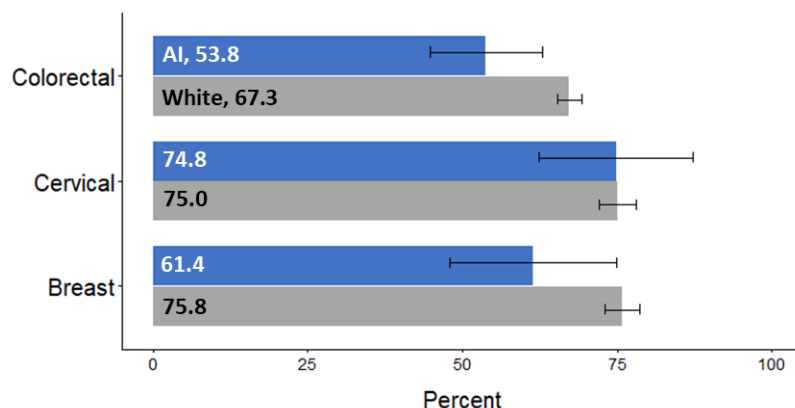
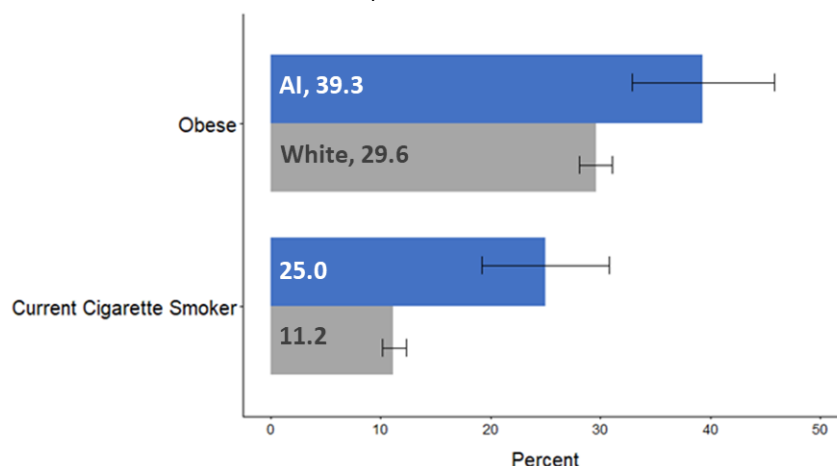


Figure 5: Proportion of adults who are a current smoker or obese among **American Indian** residents compared to **White** residents, Montana, 2023



Source: MT Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System