

Today's 50-somethings may live until they are 90

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If you are around age 50 today, you can expect to live a good deal longer than your parents did. Today's 40-year-olds, 30-year-olds and 20-year-olds will live even longer.

The latest population projections from Statistics Norway's (SSB) contain some surprises, especially if you are approaching retirement: a Norwegian woman who is now about 50 can expect to live until she is 90.

If you are a 50-year-old Norwegian man today, you can expect to live on average until you are 88.

By comparison, today's men and women live on average until they are 81 and 84, respectively.

Men will see the biggest increase

When Statistics Norway makes these projections, statisticians assume that the trends they have seen in the years from 1990 to 2017 will continue.

They also warn that given uncertainties, the projections are just that — and have an 80 per cent likelihood of being approximately what they predict.

Recent trends suggest that Norwegian men will see the greatest increase in their average life expectancy in the coming years.

One major reason behind this development is that so many Norwegian men have stopped smoking.

Nevertheless, the SSB researchers do not believe that Norwegian men will eventually have a longer life expectancy than women.

Changed lifestyles and better health care

The strong increase in life expectancy among Norwegian men and women is in great part due to a combination of healthier lifestyles and better health care.

Most Norwegians eat healthier food than they once did. At the same time, new medical technologies and drugs are being developed at a rapid pace.

Figures from the Norwegian Cause of Death Registry at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health show that as few as one in four deaths in Norway are due to cardiovascular disease.

In the 1970s, half of all deaths in Norway were due to cardiovascular diseases.

As we live ever longer, however, more and more of us will die of cancer. In the 1970s, every fifth Norwegian died of cancer. Today, every third Norwegian dies from cancer.

This increased life expectancy also means that Norway's population is growing older.

This ageing of the population will be most noticeable where the fewest people live, such as outside cities and urban areas.

In 20 years, more than every third inhabitant in some Norwegian district municipalities will be older than 70.

In just 15 years, for the first time in history, there will be more elderly people (65+) than children and young people (0-19) in the Norwegian population.

There will also be more immigrants in Norway, SSB predicts. But population growth in this group will primarily occur among immigrants over the age of 35.

This is because there will probably be fewer new immigrants and also because the immigrant population is also ageing.

[Read the Norwegian version of this article at forskning.no](#) [4]

 [Norwegian men have increased their lifespan by slightly over three months every year since 1990. Women have increased their lifespan by slightly under two months for each year during the same timeframe. This development begs the question: just how long can a human live? \(Photo: Jacob Lund / Shutterstock / NTB scanpix\)](#) [5]

 [The figure shows the age at which men \(blue\) and women \(red\) could expect to die in 1990 and 2017 respectively. \(Data and graphics: Statistics Norway\)](#) [6]

 [The older you become, the longer you can expect to live. If you are an 80-year-old Norwegian man now, you can expect to live on average an additional 9 years, or 10 years if you are a woman. \(Photo: aastock / Shutterstock / NTB scanpix\)](#) [7]

 [The difference in life expectancy between women and men has been almost halved since 1990, when it was 6.4 years. In 2017, it was only 3.4 years. This is the same difference in life expectancy as was found in Norway before World War II. \(Photo: Monkey Business Images / Shutterstock / NTB scanpix\)](#) [8]

 [A baby boy born today can expect to live 7.5 years longer than a boy born in 1990. A baby girl can expect to live 4 years longer than a girl born in 1990. \(Illustration photo: Patryk Kosmider / Shutterstock / NTB scanpix\)](#) [9]

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[Stefan Leknes, Sturla A. Løkken, Astri Syse and Marianne Tønnessen: "Population projections 2018 - Models, assumptions and results", Statistics Norway Report 2018/21. Report \(in Norwegian\)](#) [14]

[Nancy Bazilchuk](#) [15] [based on an article by Bård Amundsen](#) [16]

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