CDC Report Provides Snapshot of U.S. Health

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the use of medical technology has grown dramatically over the last decade, according to the federal government’s annual health report.
That’s just one finding in the massive “Health, United States, 2009,” a snapshot of Americans’ health, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention compiles yearly as “an essential step in making sound health policy and setting research and program priorities.”
This year’s edition, the 33rd, includes a special section on medical technology, which includes procedures, tests, drugs, and devices, and support systems such as computerized records. The principal findings in this section include:

- The use of MRI, CT, and PET imaging soared during the past decade. The number of such imaging studies either or provided by physician offices and hospital outpatient departments more than tripled; those ordered or provided by emergency departments quadrupled.
- The rate of knee replacement surgery performed in patients aged 45 years and older rose 70% during the same interval, from 26 to 45 per 10,000 population. The rate of total hip replacement surgery increased by 33%, and that of partial hip replacements increased by 60%.
- The rate of angioplasty without stent placement declined by 80% during the past decade. Drug-eluting stents have rapidly replaced bare-metal stents and were used in 75% of angioplasties in 2006.
- The number of assisted reproductive technology cycles doubled during the past decade, with the fastest rate of growth occurring in women under 40 (11% per year).
- The rate of outpatient upper endoscopies rose by 90%, and the rate of outpatient colonoscopy tripled during the same interval.
- The use of diabetes drugs among patients aged 45 and older increased approximately 50%, and that of statins soared 10-fold in the past decade.
- The percentage of people taking at least one prescription drug during the preceding month rose from 38% in the 1980s and 1990s to 47% in recent years. The percentage taking three or more prescription drugs increased from 11% to 21% during that time. The rate of diagnosis of chronic health conditions has increased by 1% per year in the past decade.
- The rate of COPD declines was also noted, as was the rate of pneumonia.
- Mortality is down, with the fastest rate of decline noted for heart disease.

All content is fully cited.

The full report is available at www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus.htm.