



# The Health of Clark County: Facts at a Glance

Clark County Public Health, June 2008

The Washington State Department of Health recently released [The Health of Washington State, 2007](#), a report that shows trends in the health and well-being of Washingtonians, including Clark County residents.<sup>i</sup> The report shows how Washingtonians are doing on a variety of health measures and looks at aspects of individual health that comprise a healthy population.

Public health professionals define health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”<sup>iii</sup> Under this definition, health is affected by environmental conditions, economic status, and individual characteristics and behaviors that contribute to disease, injury, or disability. These factors are important to understand if we are to prevent disease from occurring in the first place.

*The Health of Washington State, 2007* also shows state-level health disparities – differences in health status between people based on factors like age or race/ethnicity. Clark County Public Health is developing data on many of the health indicators used in the report to show more detail, including disparities, within the health of Clark County’s population. Clark County Public Health will use the state’s report as a tool for understanding and responding to factors that contribute to health and illness.

The following table summarizes key findings from the report and compares Clark County health information with the state as a whole. Please see footnotes for definitions and technical notes:

Health Category	Specific Measure	Clark County Rate <sup>iii</sup>	WA Rate	Clark Compared to State <sup>iv</sup>
<b>General Health Status</b>				
Life Expectancy	<b>Life Expectancy</b> is the number of years a newborn can be expected to live if the current age-specific death rates continue.	78.3 years	79.3 years	↓
Adult Health Status	<b>Health status</b> is self-reported by survey respondents who are asked about their general health and the number of days during the past 30 when their physical or mental health was not good or kept them from usual activities. The measure here is self-report of good health.	87%	87%	↔
Hospitalization	<b>Hospitalizations</b> are all discharges of residents admitted to Washington and Oregon licensed acute-care facilities or any U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospital. In-hospital births are excluded. <sup>v</sup>	8,499 per 100,000	8,617 per 100,000	↓
Mortality	<b>Mortality</b> includes age-adjusted deaths from all causes in a given year.	812 per 100,000	759 per 100,000	↑
People with Disabilities	<b>People with disabilities</b> are those who report being limited in any way in any activities because of physical, mental, or emotional problems, or who have health problems that require them to use special equipment. This measure is for those ages 5 and older.	14%	14%	↔

Health Category	Specific Measure	Clark County Rate <sup>iii</sup>	WA Rate	Clark Compared to State <sup>iv</sup>
<b>General Health Status (continued)</b>				
Adult Mental Health	<b>Adult Mental health</b> is the successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships, and the ability to adapt to change and to cope with adversity. <b>Poor mental health</b> refers to alterations in thinking, mood, or behaviors associated with distress and/or impaired function. For this report, this is defined as self-reported poor mental health 14 days or more in the past month for adults, and in youth as having symptoms of depression for two or more weeks in the past year.	11%	10%	↔
Oral Health	The measure here is <b>Adult tooth loss</b> , an indicator of oral health. Functional dentition is defined as having 21 or more natural teeth (i.e., less than six teeth lost). A full dentition in adults is the presence of all natural teeth (28 teeth), not including the third molars.	14%	13%	↔
<b>Risk and Protective Factors</b>				
Tobacco Use	The <b>adult smoking rate</b> is defined as an adult who has smoked at least 100 cigarettes in his or her lifetime and currently smokes every day or some days.	20%	19%	↔
Obesity	<b>Obesity</b> is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a body mass index (BMI) of 30–39.9, while overweight in adults as BMI of 25–29.9. The obesity rate is shown here. Including overweight, the rate for Clark is 62%, compared to 59% for WA.	26%	22%	↑
Physically Active Adults	<b>Physical activity</b> is bodily movement that expends energy. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults engage in moderate-intensity physical activity for 30 minutes on five or more days of the week <i>or</i> engage in vigorous-intensity physical activity on three or more days of the week. The measure is a percent of adults who met this goal.	62%	63%	↔
Nutrition	<b>Nutrition</b> is the process of absorbing nutrients from food and processing them in the body to keep healthy or to grow. Human nutrition is influenced by food choices as well as social, economic, and cultural factors that determine those choices. Poor nutrition results from an inadequate or inappropriate dietary intake. The measure here is the percent of adults who eat 5 or more portions of fruits and vegetables per day.	23%	24%	↔

Health Category	Specific Measure	Clark County Rate <sup>iii</sup>	WA Rate	Clark Compared to State <sup>iv</sup>
<b>Risk and Protective Factors (continued)</b>				
Alcohol Abuse and Dependence	<b>Alcohol abuse</b> symptoms include failure to fulfill major obligations at work, school, or home and recurrent legal problems. Symptoms of <b>dependence</b> include tolerance, withdrawal, drinking more than intended, giving up social, occupational or recreational activities because of drinking, and continued drinking despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent problem. Rates of alcohol abuse and dependence are not available. For this report, we measure <b>binge drinking</b> as five or more drinks on one occasion in the past month.	14%	14%	↔
Drug Abuse and Dependence	<b>Drug abuse</b> symptoms include failure to fulfill major obligations at work, school, or home and recurrent legal problems. Symptoms of <b>dependence</b> include tolerance, withdrawal, using more of the substance than intended, giving up social, occupational or recreational activities because of substance use, and continued use despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent problem. Data on drug abuse and dependence are not available and so we measure <b>drug-induced deaths</b> .	11 per 100,000	13 per 100,000	↓
<b>Infectious Disease</b>				
Sexually Transmitted Infections	<b>Gonorrhea</b> is one of the more than 25 infectious diseases spread primarily through sexual activity. Gonorrhea is detected by presence of the bacterium <i>Neisseria gonorrhoeae</i> .	44 per 100,000	57 per 100,000	↓
Chlamydia	<b>Chlamydia</b> is another sexually transmitted disease, specifically diagnosed through detection of the bacterium <i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i> . Chlamydia is the most common reportable condition in the state. <sup>vi</sup>	221 per 100,000	276 per 100,000	↓
HIV/AIDS	<b>HIV</b> or human immunodeficiency virus results, without treatment, in a variety of manifestations that become more severe over time, resulting in acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).	6.6 per 100,000	9.2 per 100,000	↓
Hepatitis C	<b>Hepatitis C</b> is a viral infection of the liver that shows up as an asymptomatic condition, mild to severe liver disease, or fulminating fatal condition. Symptoms from acute infection are tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal discomfort, dark urine, clay-colored stool, muscle and joint pains, and jaundice. About 60-85% of individuals with acute hepatitis C infection develop chronic infection, and about 20% with chronic infection will progress to cirrhosis or liver cancer over 10 to 20 years.	21 per 100,000	81 per 100,000	↓

Health Category	Specific Measure	Clark County Rate <sup>iii</sup>	WA Rate	Clark Compared to State <sup>iv</sup>
<b>Infectious Disease (continued)</b>				
Adult Immunization	<b>Flu shot for adults &gt;age 65</b> within the past 12 months and ever-vaccinated for pneumococcal disease is a standard measure of adult vaccination. The standard measure of appropriate immunization for children ages 19-35 months is a series of vaccinations that includes DTP, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella, Hib, hepatitis B; and one dose of varicella.	70%	69%	↔
Tuberculosis	<b>Tuberculosis</b> is an infectious, inflammatory communicable disease that most commonly attacks the lungs, although it can occur in almost any part of the body. The causative agent, <i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> , is spread through the air.	2 per 100,000	4 per 100,000	↔
<b>Chronic Disease</b>				
Coronary Heart Disease Deaths	<b>Coronary Heart Disease (CHD)</b> is characterized by decreased blood flow through the coronary arteries, usually caused by atherosclerosis. This results in decreased oxygen supply to the heart muscle and can cause reduced heart muscle function and destruction of heart muscle cells (myocardial infarction or "heart attack"). Measure is the rate of CHD mortality.	127 per 100,000	131 per 100,000	↔
Stroke Deaths	<b>Stroke</b> is a sudden loss of movement or speech resulting from problems in blood vessels, leading to brain injury. Ischemic stroke (80% of all strokes) is caused by reduction in blood supply to part of the brain. Blood flow becomes obstructed from a blockage of an artery or by bits of debris transported through the bloodstream, usually from the heart. Measure is the rate of stroke mortality.	61 per 100,000	56 per 100,000	↑
Asthma Diagnoses	<b>Asthma</b> is a chronic inflammatory disease of the airways characterized by airflow obstruction and airway hyper-responsiveness. Clinical symptoms include wheezing and shortness of breath. Measure is percent of adults who have been told they have asthma.	10%	9%	↔
Female Breast Cancer Deaths	<b>Cancer of the female breast</b> is characterized by uncontrolled growth of cells developing in a woman's breast with the potential to invade and spread to other sites. Measure is the rate of mortality.	23 per 100,000	24 per 100,000	↔
Colorectal Cancer Diagnoses	<b>Colorectal cancer</b> is characterized by uncontrolled growth of neoplastic cells developing in the lower segment of the digestive tract, with the potential to invade and spread to other sites. Measure is the rate of diagnosed colorectal cancer.	52 per 100,000	48 per 100,000	↔

Health Category	Specific Measure	Clark County Rate <sup>iii</sup>	WA Rate	Clark Compared to State <sup>iv</sup>
<b>Chronic Disease (continued)</b>				
Lung Cancer Deaths	<b>Lung cancer</b> is uncontrolled growth of cancer cells in the lung or large air passages of the lungs. The measure is the rate of mortality.	59 per 100,000	53 per 100,000	↑
Melanoma Diagnoses	<b>Melanoma</b> of the skin is characterized by uncontrolled growth of neoplastic cells developing from the melanocytes in the skin with the potential to invade and spread to other sites. The measure is the rate of diagnosed melanoma.	52 per 100,000	40 per 100,000	↑
Adult Diabetes	<b>Diabetes</b> is a chronic condition characterized by high blood sugar resulting from the body's inability to use blood glucose for energy. In type 1 diabetes, the pancreas no longer makes insulin, and blood glucose cannot enter the cells to be used for energy. In type 2 diabetes, either the pancreas does not make enough insulin or the body is unable to use insulin correctly. The measure is the rate of diabetes (either type) among adults.	7%	6%	↔
<b>Injury and Violence</b>				
Motor Vehicle Crash Deaths	<b>Motor vehicle crashes</b> occur on and off public roads, including those involving drivers, passengers, pedestrians, motorcyclists, and bicyclists. The measure here is the death rate.	9 per 100,000	11 per 100,000	↔
Traumatic Brain Injury Deaths	<b>Traumatic brain injury</b> can result in disability or death. The measure is deaths due to traumatic brain injury from all causes.	16 per 100,000	21 per 100,000	↓
Falls Among Older Adults	<b>Falls</b> result in unintentional injuries for people ages 65 and older. The measure is the rate of hospitalization.	1,613 per 100,000	1,701 per 100,000	↔
Poisoning/Drug Overdose	<b>Poisoning/Drug Deaths</b> include accidental overdose of drug, wrong drug given or taken in error, and drug taken inadvertently; accidents in the use of drugs; and the damaging effects of ingestion, inhalation, or other exposure to a broad range of chemicals, including pesticides, heavy metals, gases/vapors, drugs, and common household substances, such as bleach and ammonia.	11 per 100,000	13 per 100,000	↓
Suicide	<b>Suicide deaths</b> are those from an injury, poisoning, or suffocation where there is evidence that a self-inflicted act led to the person's death. Suicide includes all intentional, self-inflicted deaths.	13 per 100,000	13 per 100,000	↔
Youth Violence: Arrest Rate	<b>Serious violent crime</b> includes murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault (assault with a weapon or with intent to cause severe injury). "Youth" includes anyone between the ages of 10 and 24. Measure is arrest rate for serious violent crime.	302 per 100,000	320 per 100,000	↔

Health Category	Specific Measure	Clark County Rate <sup>iii</sup>	WA Rate	Clark Compared to State <sup>iv</sup>
<b>Injury and Violence (continued)</b>				
Domestic Violence Offenses	<b>Domestic violence</b> is a pattern of assault and coercion, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse against intimate partners. Measure is domestic violence offenses reported to the police and self reports of physical assault, unwanted sex, and injury by an intimate partner.	741 per 100,000	872 per 100,000	↓
Child Abuse and Neglect	<b>Child abuse and neglect</b> are behaviors that are outside the norms of conduct and entail a substantial risk of causing a child physical or emotional harm. Maltreatment includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional maltreatment. The measure is the number of children age 0-17 in referrals accepted for investigation by Child Protective Services following an initial screening.	29 per 1,000	28 per 1,000	↑
<b>Maternal and Child Health</b>				
Adolescent Pregnancy and Childbearing	<b>Pregnancy</b> among 15–17 year-olds; pregnancy among teens younger than 15 is a rare event, and teens older than 17 are at lower risk for poor birth outcomes. Adolescent pregnancies are estimated by adding together reported births, induced abortions, and fetal losses for females ages 15–17.	21 per 1,000	28 per 1,000	↓
Low Birth Weight	<b>Low birth weight (singleton)</b> is newborn weight less than 2,500 grams (5 lbs. 8 oz.) at birth. Low birth weight infants are either preterm (born at less than 37 weeks gestation) or full-term (born at 37 or more weeks).	4.0 per 100,000	4.7 per 100,000	↓
<b>Environmental Health</b>				
These indicators are under development by DOH and not often available at the county level. Indicators include Drinking Water Quality, Food borne Illness, Indoor Air Quality, and Outdoor Air Quality. See <a href="#">The Health of Washington State, 2007</a> for some regional and state data.				
<b>Occupational Health</b>				
Non-Fatal Occupational Injury	<b>Occupational Injury</b> is any wound or damage to the body resulting in lost work time, permanent partial disability, or a kept-on-salary Washington State workers' compensation claim.	81 per 100,000	143 per 100,000	↓

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<b>Health Care Services</b>				
Access to Primary Care	<b>Primary health care</b> services are accessible if people can receive essential services when and where they are needed. Insurance enables health care access. A personal health care provider is the gateway to obtaining services. Measure is the percent of adults who identify that they have a health care provider.	77%	78%	↔
Access to Prenatal Care	<b>Prenatal care</b> is comprehensive medical care provided during pregnancy, labor and delivery, and postpartum. Services include screening for medical and behavioral conditions known to increase the risk of poor birth outcomes and treatment for those conditions. Prenatal care is monitored by the percent of women initiating prenatal care in the first three months of pregnancy (first trimester).	76%	79%	↓

i The Health of Washington State, 2007, available at the Department of Health web site <http://www.doh.wa.gov/HWS/TOC2007.shtm>

ii World Health Organization, Constitution of the World Health Organization, 1948.

iii Data on health indicators are only as good as the accuracy and completeness of reports on those indicators. Diseases or conditions may be underreported due to lack of access to care or screening, inaccurate or missed diagnosis, inaccurate coding or reporting by providers, or other factors.

iv In comparing Clark County to the overall Washington rate for each indicator, the analysis included a measure of whether an apparent difference between Clark and Washington figures represented a real difference between the two figures, versus being due to chance. Ninety-five percent (95%) confidence intervals were used to approximate statistical significance. If two confidence intervals did not overlap, then the assumption is that we are 95% confident that there was a real difference between two figures. In this report, the symbols ↑ (representing "Higher") or ↓ (representing "Lower") indicate that two confidence intervals did not overlap and we are 95% confident that there exists a real difference between the two figures. If two figures are described as ↔ ("Similar"), this indicates that even if they appear to be different, this difference is likely due to chance as opposed to a real difference. In addition, because in some cases a higher rate is "good" (e.g., immunization rates) and in some cases "bad" (e.g., motor vehicle crash death rates) we have used color coding to indicate a value along with the terms "higher," "lower," and "similar." Red means that Clark County is doing worse than the state, green is better, and yellow is similar.

v The data show that Clark County has a lower rate of hospitalization. This is shown as better than the Washington average rate, possibly indicating less need for hospitalization (i.e., due to overall better health). However, it could also mean that Clark County residents have less access to health care.