

Health Equity Brief

Chronic Disease and Risk Behaviors in Allegheny County

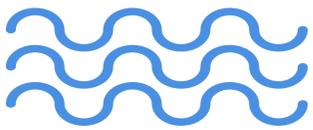


Issue 1, May 2018

All data for this brief come from Allegheny County Survey data: <http://www.achd.net/biostats/brfss.html>

What Influences Chronic Diseases?

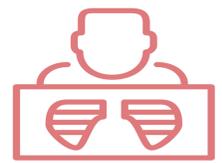
The onset and severity of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, or cancer are complex. Having a family history of a disease plays a role, but social factors such as employment, education, access to health care services, safe and inexpensive places for physical activity, and the ability to shop for healthier foods (like fruits and vegetables) are also important determinants of health. These social and economic factors may also influence personal behaviors that add to the risk for chronic diseases, such as tobacco use, a diet high in fat and sodium, and little to no physical activity (sometimes because of very limited free time).



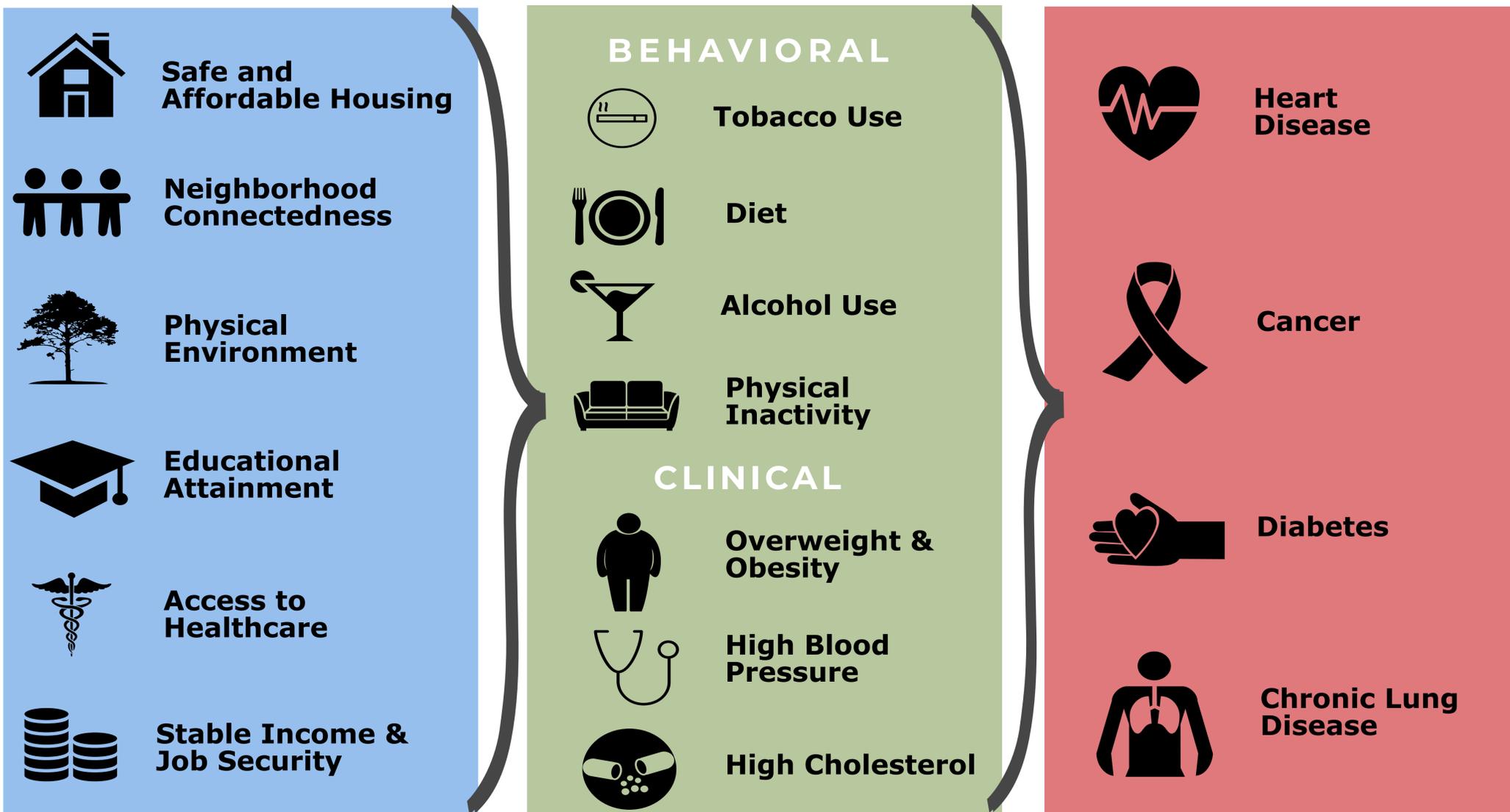
Factors Impacting Chronic Disease



Risk Factors



Chronic Diseases

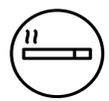


Health Equity & Chronic Disease

To achieve health equity, the unjust and unfair disparities in behavioral and clinical risk factors must be addressed.

Risk Factors for Chronic Disease

Disparities in Behavioral Risk Factors



Smoking

19.0%

smoking everyday or some days



Race

30% of non-Hispanic Blacks
vs.

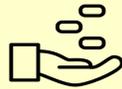
17% of non-Hispanic Whites



Fruit Intake

3.5%

no fruit intake, past week



Income

8% of individuals making < \$15,000

vs.

2% of individuals making > \$75,000



Vegetable Intake

1.6%

no vegetable intake, past week



Education

5% of individuals w/o a high school degree
vs.

0.6% of individuals with a college degree



Physical Activity

21.8%

no physical activity,
past month

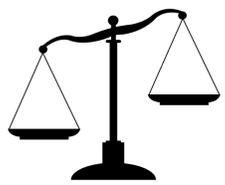


Gender

25% of females
vs.

19% of males

Risk factors associated with chronic diseases are more common in different populations.



For example, in Allegheny County:

The smoking rate is 19%, yet 30% of non-Hispanic Black individuals smoke, while just 17% of non-Hispanic White individuals smoke.

Levels of fruit and vegetable intake, as well physical activity, are less among individuals with lower income and education levels.

Gender also makes a difference. More females are physically inactive, when compared to males.

Disparities in Clinical Risk Factors

Overweight & Obesity

The data show that the percentage of overweight and obese adults in Allegheny County is high in all council districts, with areas in the east and south of the county having the highest rates.

High Blood Pressure

In Allegheny County, 35% of adults ages 18-64 have high blood pressure.



Disparities

48% of individuals without a high school degree have high blood pressure, versus 28% of individuals with a college degree.

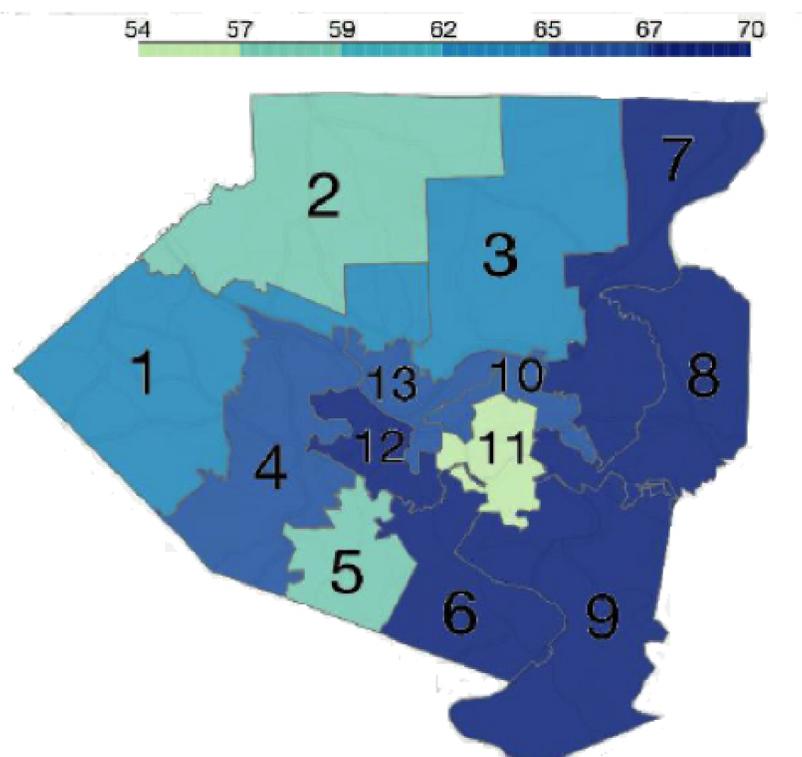
High Cholesterol

In Allegheny County, 35% of adults ages 18-64 who were tested, reported that they were told they had high cholesterol.



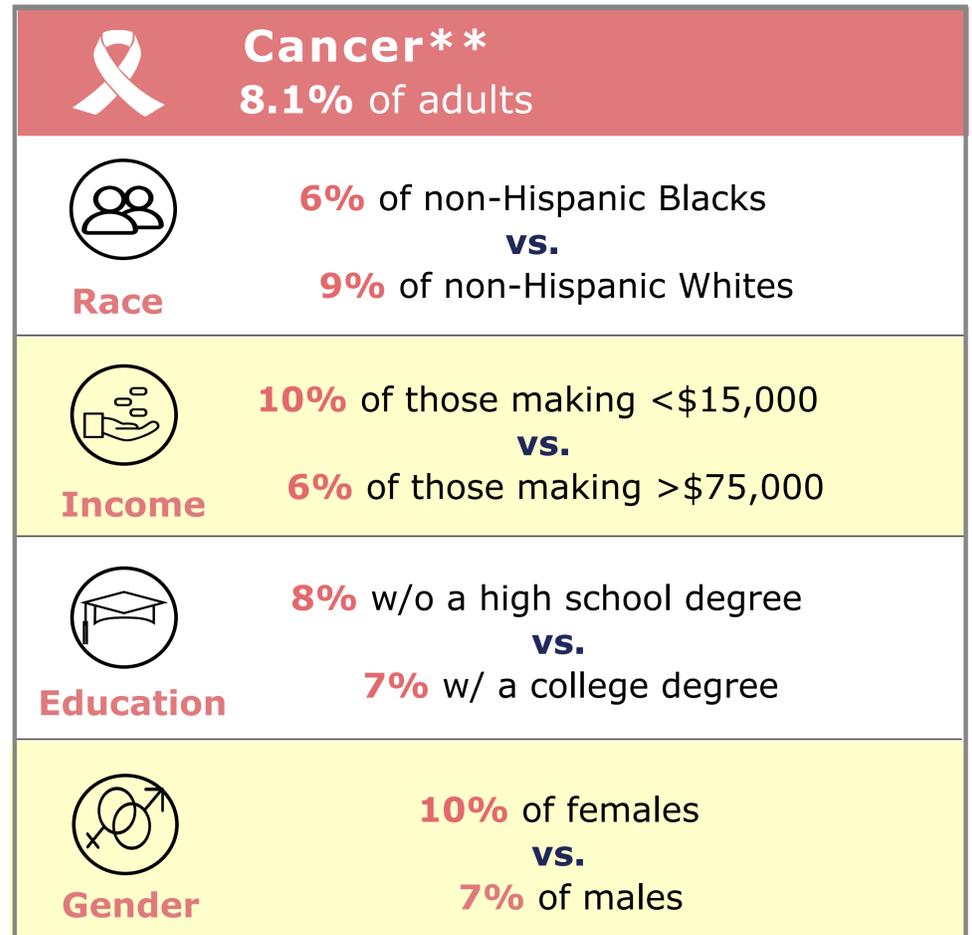
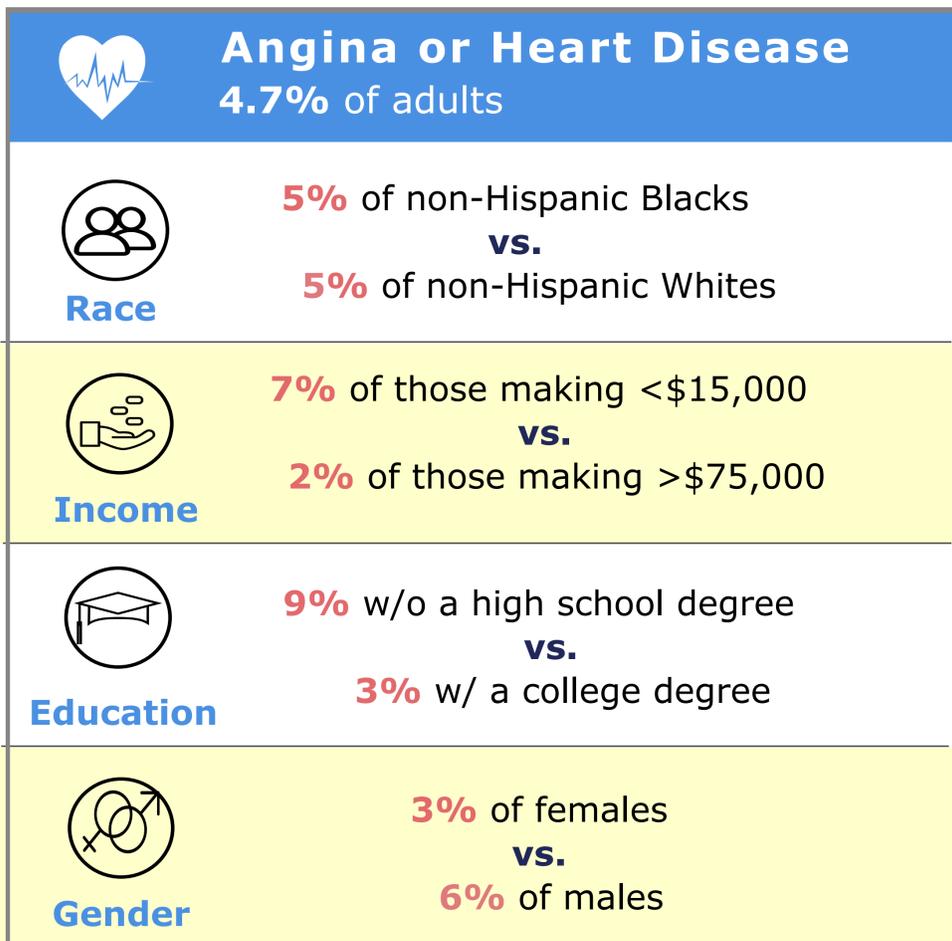
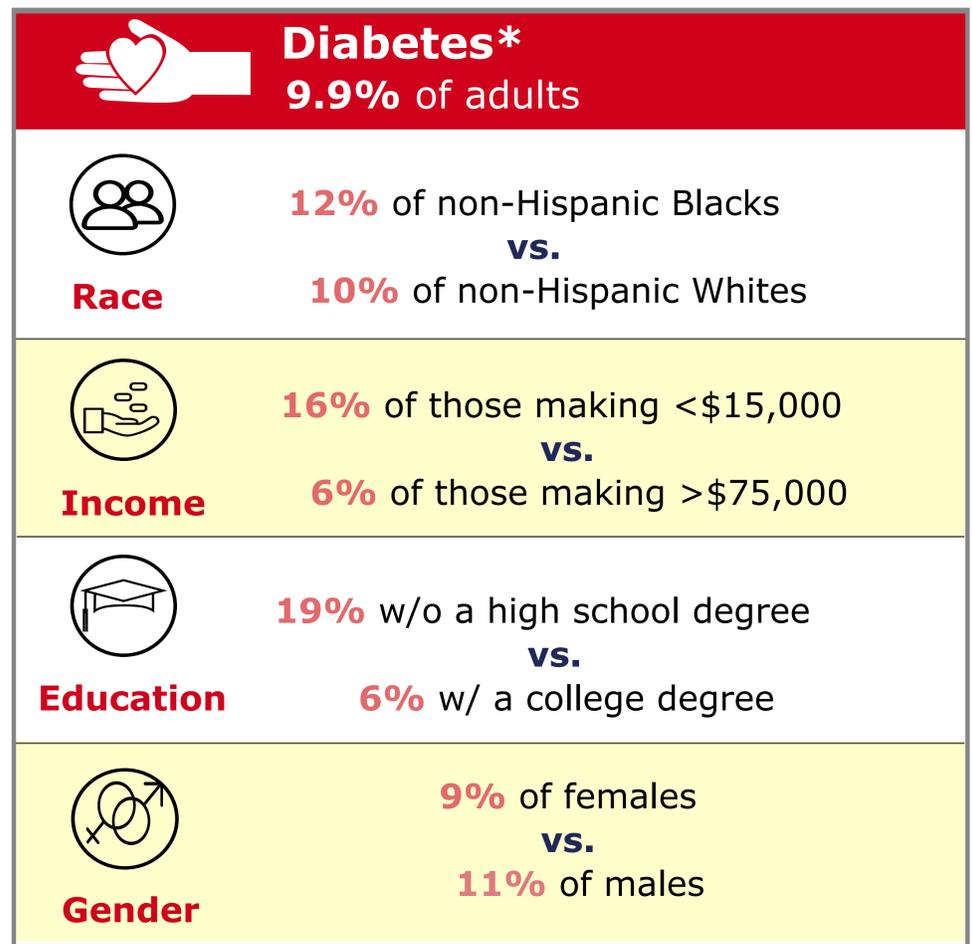
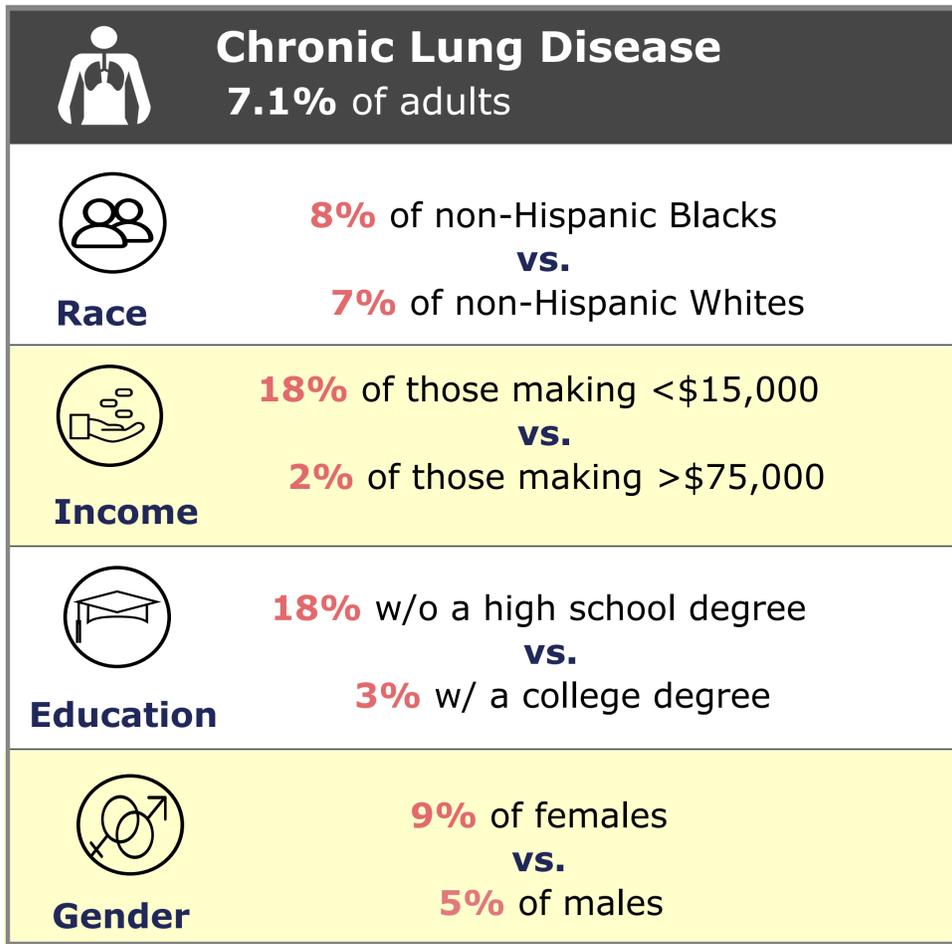
Disparities

41% of individuals making < \$15,000 had high cholesterol versus 30% of individuals making > \$75,000.



Chronic Disease in Allegheny County

The behavioral and clinical risk factors discussed on the previous page are the major contributors to chronic diseases. For instance, smoking is one of the strongest risk factors for chronic lung disease, and obesity is one of the strongest risk factors for diabetes. Obesity also influences heart disease and cancer. These chronic diseases are the leading causes of death in the United States and cause a significant health burden. The prevalence of these chronic diseases in Allegheny County is illustrated in the charts below.



*Percentage with diabetes among those who were tested; **Percentage with cancer excluding skin cancer.

Takeaways



Disparities

People with lower income & education, as well as non-Hispanic Blacks experience a greater burden of chronic disease.



Prevention

Chronic diseases can be prevented by practicing healthy lifestyle behaviors (e.g., not smoking, eating fruits & veggies, & exercising).



Healthy Living

Make healthy options your first choice. Communities and worksites should be suited to make it easy for people to live healthy lifestyles.

What is Allegheny County Doing to Close the Gaps?



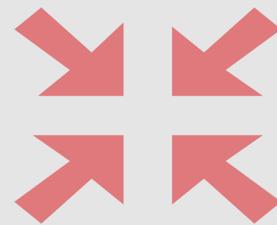
The Plan for a Healthier Allegheny (PHA), developed by a working group of professional and community members in the county, outlines specific goals and strategies to prevent chronic disease:

Goal: Decrease preventable chronic disease by assuring access to resources, knowledge, and opportunities for residents to adopt healthy behaviors.

2.2.2-4 Increase the number of adults who eat 4 or more servings of fruit and vegetables per day by 75%.

2.3.1-6 Reduce the number of adults who are not physically active by 15%.

2.4.1-7 Reduce the number of adults are current smokers by 10%.



Action Items

The Live Well Allegheny Initiative links individuals to community resources which promote healthy behaviors.

Live Well Allegheny Initiative Action Items:

- Develop indoor and outdoor wellness trails accessible to residents of all abilities.
- Encourage multi-modal transportation of residents, by providing facilities or policies that encourage walking and bike riding.
- Promote and support farmers' markets.
- Promote smoke-free buildings and perimeters.

What can you do?

- Visit the Live Well Allegheny website (see below).
- Make sure that your community becomes a Live Well Allegheny Municipality.
- Share information from the Live Well Allegheny Initiative and the Allegheny County Health Survey with your family and friends through social media.
- Talk to your health care provider about your risk factors for chronic diseases.

Resources & More Information

More ACHS Results



<http://www.achd.net/biostats/brfss.html>

PHA Dashboard



<http://www.achd.net/pha/>

Live Well Allegheny



<http://www.livewellallegheny.com/>

Contact Us



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