

Your health is more than a doctor's visit, exercise and eating healthy.

Health is more than eating healthy, exercising, getting immunizations, and a visit to the doctor's office when you are sick. Health starts in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities.

What are the social determinants of health

The conditions in which live, work and play can help explain why some people are healthier than others and why some people may not be as healthy as they could be. Our social interactions and relationships along with reliable access to economic opportunities, quality schools, and community resources, are just a few of the things that can play a role in our overall health. These non-medical factors, known as the Social Determinants of Health, are just as important to understanding and improving our health as visiting the doctor.

Key social determinants of health

Five key areas can influence health in a positive or negative way. They include:

1. **Economic Stability:** Employment opportunities, food insecurity, housing availability and affordability
2. **Education:** Available quality early childhood education opportunities, high school graduation rates, language and literacy
3. **Social and Community:** Level of civic participation and community engagement, discrimination, incarceration rates
4. **Health and Health Care:** Access to health care and primary care, health literacy levels
5. **Neighborhood and Built Environment:** Access to nutritious foods, rates of crime and violence, environmental conditions, quality of housing

Addressing social determinants of health

Some communities, organizations, and institutions are working to help address and improve their population's health outcomes. But there are also non-medical things individuals and groups of people can do to begin to make changes to improve their health.

- Increase your awareness of the various risk factors that may affect your health.
- Understand the importance of certain risk screenings or surveys when asked by trusted community or medical resources.
- Ask for available resources in your community and at your healthcare provider's office. Many communities have organizations that can provide resources to people who may not otherwise be able to access them.
- Ask employers, local elected officials and other community leaders what they are doing to address the social determinants of health of the people they represent.
- Advocate for changes in your neighborhood and community and encourage others to join.

More Information

Visit the following websites to find more information on the Social Determinants of Health and ways organizations and communities are addressing them:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/index.htm>
- Healthy People 2030: <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>

