



Young Australians their health and wellbeing 2011

Young Australians: their health and wellbeing 2011 is the fourth in a series of national statistical reports on young people aged 12–24 years produced by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

This report provides the latest available information on how Australia's young people are faring according to national indicators of health and wellbeing.

The indicators cover health status and outcomes, risk and protective factors, socio-economic factors, family and community environments, and health system performance.

Early childhood influences and exposures are also important for youth development. The AIHW reports on the health and wellbeing of children aged 0–14 years, in a separate complementary report, *A picture of Australia's children (1998, 2002, 2005, 2009)*.



Key findings

The good news

- The majority of young people rate their health as 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'.
- Most young people are achieving national minimum standards for reading, writing and numeracy, are fully engaged in study or work, and have strong support networks.
- Most young people are able to get support from outside the household in times of crisis.
- There have been large falls in death rates among young people in recent years, mostly due to falls in injury deaths.
- Asthma hospitalisations have fallen.
- Notifications for hepatitis A, B and C have fallen.
- Young people have improved cancer survival.
- There have been falls in smoking and illicit substance use.
- Most sexually active Year 10 and Year 12 students use some form of contraception.

Things to work on

- Many young people are overweight or obese, most do not do enough physical activity, and nearly all do not eat enough fruit and vegetables.
- Considerable proportions of young people drink at risky levels, are victims of alcohol- or drug-related violence, or are homeless.
- There are rising rates of diabetes and sexually transmissible infections (largely chlamydia).
- Mental health problems and disorders account for the highest burden of disease among young people.
- Among young males, road deaths are a particular area of concern, being nearly three times as high as for females.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

Compared with their non-Indigenous counterparts, Indigenous young people are:

- twice as likely to die from all causes, including 6 times as likely to die from assault and 4 times as likely from suicide
- 10 times as likely to have notifications for sexually transmissible infections and 6 times as likely for hepatitis
- 6 times as likely to be teenage mothers
- 6–7 times as likely to be in the child protection system
- 15 times as likely to be under juvenile justice supervision or in prison
- twice as likely to be unemployed or on income support
- 3 times as likely to live in overcrowded housing
- 2–3 times as likely to be daily smokers.

Young people in remote areas

Compared to their city counterparts, young people living in remote and very remote areas:

- have higher death rates
- have more dental decay
- are less likely to see a general practitioner
- are less likely to be meeting minimum standards for reading, writing and numeracy and to be studying for a qualification
- are more likely to be in jobless families and live in overcrowded housing.

National indicators of youth health and wellbeing: quick reference guide

Key: ✓ = favourable trend; ✗ = unfavourable trend; ~ = no change or no clear trend; .. = no trend data available or presented.

Health status and wellbeing		Year of data	Value	Trend
Physical and mental wellbeing	Proportion of young people aged 15–24 years rating their health as 'excellent', 'very good' or 'good' ^{(a) (b)}	2007–08	93%	~
Disability and activity limitation	Proportion of young people aged 15–24 years with severe or profound core activity limitation	2009	7%	..
Deaths	Death rates for young people aged 12–24 years	2007	37 per 100,000	✓
Mental health	Proportion of young people aged 16–24 years having high or very high levels of psychological distress as measured by the Kessler 10 (K10) scale ^{(a)(b)}	2007	9%	~
	Prevalence of mental disorders among young people aged 16–24 years ^{(a)(b)}	2007	26%	..
Injury and poisoning	Injury and poisoning death rate for young people aged 12–24 years	2007	25 per 100,000	✓
	Road transport accident death rate for young people aged 12–24 years	2009	9 per 100,000	✓
	Assault death rate for young people aged 12–24 years	2007–08	1.3 per 100,000	✓
	Suicide rate for young people aged 15–24 years ^(a)	2007	10 per 100,000	✓
	Accidental poisoning death rate for young people aged 12–24 years	2007	1.1 per 100,000	~
	Injury and poisoning hospitalisation rate for young people aged 12–24 years	2008–09	2,199 per 100,000	✗
Chronic conditions	Prevalence of long-term conditions among young people aged 12–24 years	2007–08	60%	✓
	Proportion of young people aged 12–24 years with asthma as a long-term condition	2007–08	11%	✓
	Incidence of diabetes among young people aged 15–24 years ^(b)	2007	31 per 100,000	✗
	Incidence of cancer per 100,000 young people aged 12–24 years	2007	26 per 100,000	~
Communicable diseases	Incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases among young people aged 12–24 years	2008	73 per 100,000	~
	Pertussis	2008	64 per 100,000	~
	Hepatitis A, B and C notification rates for young people aged 12–24 years	2008	67 per 100,000	✓
	Hepatitis A	2008	1.8 per 100,000	✓
	Hepatitis B	2008	29 per 100,000	✓
	Hepatitis C	2008	36 per 100,000	✓
	HIV infection notification rate for young people aged 12–24 years	2008	3.1 per 100,000	✗
	Incidence of notifiable sexually transmissible infections among young people aged 12–24 years	2008	1,045 per 100,000	✗
Chlamydia	2008	945 per 100,000	✗	
Oral health	Proportion of young people aged 12 and 15 years decay-free ^(a)	2003–2004	12 years 58% 15 years 43%	~
	Mean number of decayed, missing or filled teeth (DMFT) at 12 and 15 years ^(a)	2003–2004	12 years 1.03 15 years 2.01	~

Report Profile Young Australians: their health and wellbeing 2011

Factors influencing health		Year of data	Value	Trend
Overweight and obesity	Proportion of young people aged 12–24 years who are overweight or obese	2007–08	35%	..
Physical activity	Proportion of young people aged 15–24 years meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines ^{(b)(c)}	2007–08	44%	..
Nutrition	Proportion of young people aged 12–24 years meeting Australian Dietary Guidelines	2007–08	5%	✘
Sun protection	Proportion of young people aged 12–24 years using sun protection			
	Use sunscreen (12–17 year olds) ^(b)		37%	~
	Wore sunglasses (18–24 year olds) ^(b)	2006–07	47%	✘
Substance use	Reported rate for substance use disorders for young people aged 16–24 years ^(b)	2007	13%	..
	Proportion of young people aged 12–24 years who are daily smokers	2007	11%	✓
	Proportion of young people aged 12–24 years who drink at risky or high-risk levels in the short term (ST) or long term (LT)	2007	30% (ST) 12% (LT)	~ ~
	Proportion of young people aged 12–24 years who had used an illicit drug within the last 12 months	2007	19%	✓
Sexual and reproductive health	Proportion of young people in Year 10 and Year 12 who have had sexual intercourse ^(b)	2008	40%	✘
	Proportion of young people in Year 10 and Year 12 who used a form of contraception at their most recent sexual encounter ^(b)	2008	99.8%	✓
	Age-specific birth rate for 15–19 year old women ^(a)	2008	17 per 1,000	~
Family and community factors		Year of data	Value	Trend
Family functioning	Under development		Data not available	
Parental health and disability	Proportion of parents rating their health as 'fair' or 'poor'	2008	16%	~
	Proportion of young people aged 15–24 years living with a parent with disability ^(b)	2003	25%	..
	Proportion of parents with a mental health problem	2008	19%	~
Social capital	Proportion of young people aged 18–24 years who are able to get support in a time of crisis from persons living outside the household ^(b)	2006	96%	~
Community and civic participation	Community participation rate for young people aged 18–24 years ^(b)	2006	72%	..
	Proportion of 17 and 18 year olds who have registered to vote	2008	19% (17 years) 60% (18–19 years)	✘
School relationships and bullying	Under development		Data not available	
Child protection	Rate of young people aged 12–17 years who were the subject of a substantiation or a child protection notification received in a given year ^(a)	2009–10	4.4 per 1,000	~
	Rate of young people aged 12–17 years who are the subject of care and protection orders ^(a)	2010	7.2 per 1,000	✘
Victims of violence	Rate of young people aged 15–24 years who have been the victim of physical or sexual assault ^(b)	2008–09	7%	..
	Alcohol- and drug-related violence victimisation rate for young people aged 12–24 years	2007	38%	✓
Young people and crime	Rate of young people aged 12–17 years who are under juvenile justice supervision ^(a)	2008–09	3.3 per 1,000	✘
	Rate of imprisonment for young people aged 18–24 years ^(a)	2009	2.6 per 1,000	✓
Environmental tobacco smoke	Proportion of households with young people aged 12–17 years where a household member smoked inside the home ^(a)	2007–08	12%	..
Homelessness	Proportion of young people aged 12–24 years who are homeless	2006	Less than 1%	✓
Overcrowded housing	Proportion of young people aged 15–24 years who live in overcrowded housing ^(b)	2007–08	9%	..



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Socioeconomic factors		Year of data	Value	Trend
Education	Proportion of young people in Year 7 and Year 9 achieving at or above the national minimum standards for literacy and numeracy ^(a)	2009	Reading 90–96%	..
			Writing 83–96%	
			Numeracy 95–95%	
	Apparent retention rate from Year 7/8 to Year 12 ^(a)	2009	76%	~
Employment	Proportion of young people aged 15–24 years undertaking study leading to qualifications ^(a)	2009	57%	✓
	Full-time participation rate of young people aged 15–24 years in education or employment ^(a)	2009	81%	~
	Unemployment rate for young people aged 15–24 years ^(a)	2010	10.6%	✘
Income	Proportion of young people aged 15–24 years receiving government income support ^(a)	2008	17%	✓
	Proportion of young people aged 18–24 years who live in households that experience financial stress ^(b)	2006	36%	~
Socioeconomic status of parents	Proportion of young people aged 12–24 years whose parents did not complete secondary school (Year 10 or above)	2008	9%	~
	Proportion of young people aged 12–24 years living in jobless families	2006–07	11%	✓
Health system performance		Year of data	Value	Trend
Potentially preventable hospitalisations	Potentially preventable hospitalisation rate for young people aged 12–24 years	2008–09	1,086 per 100,000	✘
Teenage purchase of cigarettes and alcohol	Proportion of teenage smokers aged 12–17 years who personally purchased their most recent cigarette ^(a)	2005	23%	✓
	Proportion of teenage drinkers aged 12–17 years who personally purchased their most recent alcoholic drink ^(a)	2005	8%	✓
Survival for melanoma of the skin	Five-year relative survival rate for melanoma of the skin for young people aged 12–24 years	1998–2004	96%	✓
Cervical cancer	Cervical screening rates among women aged 20–24 years ^(a)	2007–08	47%	~
	Cervical cancer vaccination rates among women aged 12–24 years	2007	44–77%	..
Appropriate use of antibiotics	Proportion of upper respiratory tract infections managed for which oral antibiotics were prescribed	2008–09	57%	~
Delivery by caesarean section	Caesarean sections as a proportion of all deliveries for young women aged 15–24 years who gave birth ^(a)	2008	21%	✘
General practice consultations	Rate of general practice encounters for young people aged 12–24 years	2008–09	3.2 per person	✘
Waiting times in emergency departments	Proportion of patients aged 12–24 years who are treated within national benchmarks for waiting times across triage categories in public hospital emergency departments,	2008–09	70%	~
Adverse events treated in hospitals	Proportion of hospitalisations for young people aged 12–24 years where an adverse event was treated and/or occurred	2008–09	4%	~

(a) Most appropriate age range for indicator.

(b) Source data not available for full age range.

(c) A proxy measure is used to determine whether National Physical Activity Guidelines are met.

For more information, please refer to the full report:

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