


# About Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

## What are social determinants of health?

[Social determinants of health \(SDOH\)](#)  are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes.

Healthy People 2030 uses a place-based framework that outlines five key areas of SDOH:



### Healthcare Access and Quality

The connection between people's access to and understanding of health services and their own health. This domain includes key issues such as access to healthcare, access to primary care, health insurance coverage, and health literacy.



### Education Access and Quality

The connection of education to health and wellbeing. This domain includes key issues such as graduating from high school, enrollment in higher education, educational attainment in general, language and literacy, and early childhood education and development.



### Social and Community Context

The connection between characteristics of the contexts within which people live, learn, work, and play, and their health and wellbeing. This includes topics like cohesion within a community, civic participation, discrimination, conditions in the workplace, and incarceration.



### Economic Stability

The connection between the financial resources people have – income, cost of living, and socioeconomic status – and their health. This area includes key issues such as poverty, employment, food security, and housing stability.



### Neighborhood and Built Environment

The connection between where a person lives – housing, neighborhood, and environment – and their health and wellbeing. This includes topics like quality of housing, access to transportation, availability of healthy foods, air and water quality, and neighborhood crime and violence.

The [World Health Organization](#) also provides a definition of social determinants of health. Social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels. They state social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities – the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries.

## How can addressing social determinants of health improve health?

Resources that enhance quality of life can have a significant influence on population health outcomes. Examples of these resources include safe and affordable housing, access to education, public safety, availability of healthy foods, local emergency/health services, and environments free of life-threatening toxins. *Healthy People 2030* highlights the importance of addressing SDOH by including “social and physical environments that promote good health for all” as one of the four overarching goals for the decade.

We also know that poverty limits access to healthy foods and safe neighborhoods and that more education is a predictor of better health. Differences in health are striking in communities with poor SDOH such as unstable housing, low income, unsafe neighborhoods, or substandard education. By applying what we know about SDOH, we can not only improve individual and population health but also advance health equity.

Find CDC [programs](#) and [tools](#) to address SDOH.

## Contact

If you'd like to learn more about SDOH or what is included on this page, contact us at [SDOH@cdc.gov](mailto:SDOH@cdc.gov).

Page last reviewed: March 10, 2021