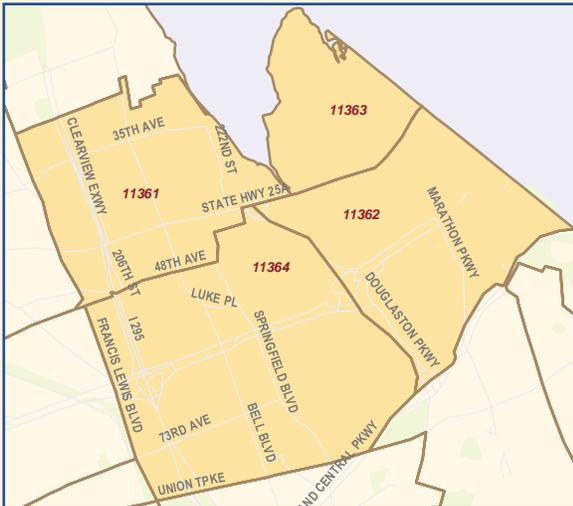


Community Health Profiles

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene



nyc.gov/health



The Health of Northeast Queens

(Including Bayside, Douglaston, Little Neck, and Oakland Gardens)

Message From the Commissioner

This community health profile highlights important health issues facing the residents of Northeast Queens, with a special focus on preventable causes of illness and death. Preventing illness requires people making healthy life choices, neighborhood resources that promote healthy living, and high-quality, accessible medical care.

New York City is the most diverse city in the U.S. This is reflected in the unique character of each neighborhood. Strategies to improve New Yorkers' health should take local concerns into account and be based on an understanding of how decisions at the city level affect local residents. The burden of illness and death does not fall equally across New York City's neighborhoods. One of the primary goals of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is to reduce and eliminate these disparities by improving health in communities with the greatest need.

Improving the health of *all* New Yorkers requires the involvement and cooperation of individual residents, community-based organizations, and the public health community. We hope that this health profile will support this effort in Northeast Queens and across New York City.

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH
Commissioner

Snapshots From the Census

Number of people living
in Northeast Queens in
2000:

88,164

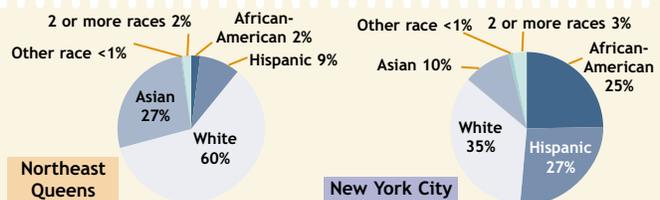
Age

People in
Northeast Queens
are slightly older
than the New York
City average

	Northeast Queens	New York City
Children (0-17 years)	20%	24%
Adults (18-64 years)	63%	64%
Adults (65 years and above)	17%	12%

Race/Ethnicity

Compared to New
York City as a whole,
more people in
Northeast Queens are
of White and Asian
race/ethnicity



Country of Origin

More than one third of
Northeast Queens residents
were born outside the U.S.
(Top 3 countries of origin:
Korea, China, Taiwan)

	Northeast Queens	New York City
foreign-born	35%	36%

Report Card on Health

This summary shows how the health of residents of Northeast Queens compares to 41 other neighborhoods in New York City. In general, people living in Northeast Queens are healthier than residents of other New York City neighborhoods. However, there remain many health issues that can be improved. The challenge of improving these indicators does not fall only on neighborhood residents but is a shared responsibility between all sectors of society.

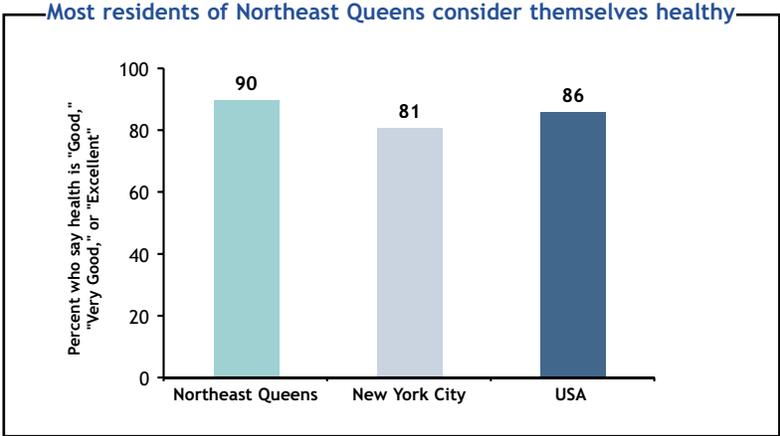
Northeast Queens compared to 41 other NYC neighborhoods

	Below Average (bottom 10)	Average (middle 22)	Above Average (top 10)
General health			✓
Maternal and child health			✓
Infectious diseases (including pneumonia, influenza, HIV/AIDS)			✓
Chronic diseases (including heart disease, diabetes, lung diseases)			✓
Prevention in doctors' offices (including cancer screening and immunizations)			✓
Access to medical care		✓	

Please see the technical notes on page 11 for details on how these measures were calculated.

How Residents Rate Their Own Health

In a recent survey, adults in Northeast Queens and across New York City were asked to rate their own health. The options were "Excellent," "Very Good," "Good," "Fair," and "Poor." In Northeast Queens, 90% said their health is "Good," "Very Good," or "Excellent." How people rate their own health is a good indication of the overall health of a community.



Major Causes of Death and Hospital Admissions

Many deaths from heart disease, the biggest killer in New York City and nationwide, are caused by preventable or controllable factors, such as smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity.

Heart disease and cancer caused the most deaths in 2001 among Northeast Queens residents. Northeast Queens had the lowest mortality rate in New York City in 2001.

Leading Causes of Death in Northeast Queens, 2001

	Northeast Queens		New York City	Northeast Queens compared to NYC as a whole	
	No. of deaths	Death rate (per 100,000 people)*	Death rate (per 100,000 people)*	Higher by	Lower by
All causes	571	480	736		35%
Heart disease	312	255	304		15%
Cancer	127	109	167		35%
Chronic lung disease	19	16	21		25%
Pneumonia and influenza	18	14	32		55%
Diabetes	12	10	22		55%
Neurologic disease and dementia	12	10	8	25%	

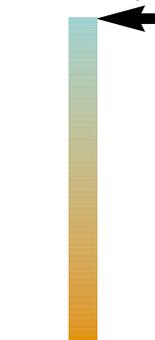
*Age-adjusted

Premature death

People who die before age 75 can be thought of as dying prematurely. The difference between 75 years and the age of a person who dies before that is called the “years of potential life lost.” More than half the years of potential life lost in Northeast Queens were due to 2 causes: heart disease/stroke and cancer. Smoking is, by far, the leading preventable cause of these illnesses.

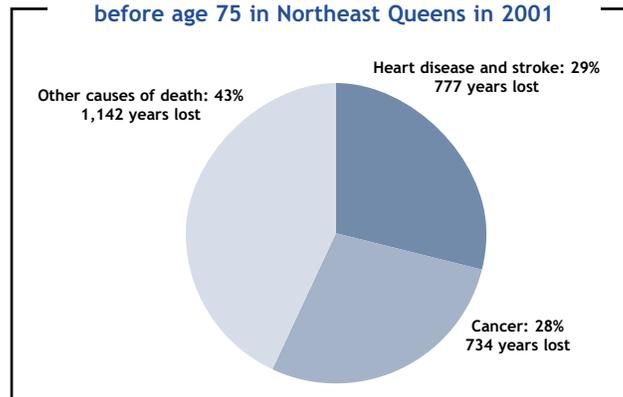
How the overall death rate in Northeast Queens ranks among 42 New York City neighborhoods

More healthy



Less healthy

More than 2,500 years of potential life were lost before age 75 in Northeast Queens in 2001



Causes of hospitalization

Heart disease is the leading cause of adult hospitalization in Northeast Queens. The hospitalization data also reveal the burden of illness due to mental illness and drug and alcohol abuse, as well as injuries and diabetes. Hospitalization rates in Northeast Queens are lower than in New York City as a whole.

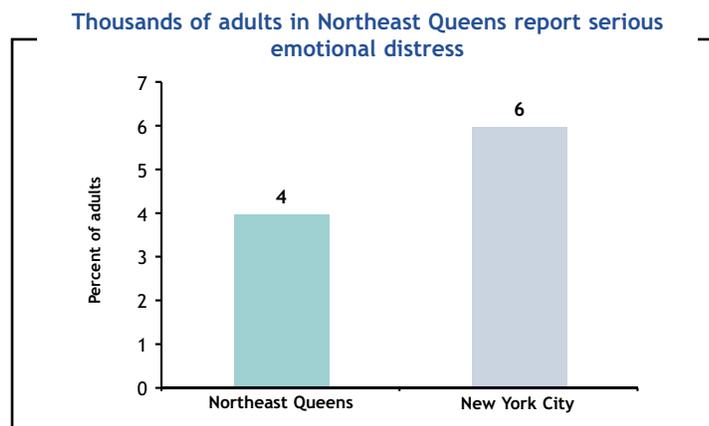
Leading Causes of Hospitalizations in Adults in Northeast Queens, 2001

	Northeast Queens		New York City	Northeast Queens compared to NYC as a whole	
	No. of admissions	Admission rate (per 100,000 people)*	Admission rate (per 100,000 people)*	Higher by	Lower by
All causes	4,645	6,006	14,140		60%
Heart disease	578	672	1,744		60%
Accidents and injuries	511	649	1,209		45%
Cancer	329	406	654		40%
Mental Illness	175	246	671		65%
Stroke	134	153	379		60%
Pneumonia and influenza	131	149	433		65%
Drug-related	81	126	492		75%
Diabetes	78	94	328		70%
Chronic lung disease	70	82	193		60%
Alcohol-related	62	92	387		75%

*Age-adjusted

Mental illness

Depression is a common and serious health problem that often goes undiagnosed but is treatable. Other treatable mental health problems, such as anxiety, affect many New Yorkers. The high number of hospitalizations for mental illness among Northeast Queens residents is one indication of the burden of mental illness there. In addition, in a recent telephone survey, 4% of adults in Northeast Queens – corresponding to about 3,000 people – reported experiencing serious emotional distress.



Reducing risky sexual behavior, getting tested for HIV, and ensuring high-quality treatment of all HIV-infected people are effective ways of preventing new HIV infections and AIDS.

HIV/AIDS

While the number of AIDS deaths has dropped dramatically across New York City over the past decade, HIV/AIDS remains a very serious public health problem. HIV and AIDS are not as common in Northeast Queens as in other New York City neighborhoods, but many residents are still at risk for infection.

HIV/AIDS in Northeast Queens, 2001	
Number of people newly diagnosed with HIV	<i>less than 10</i>
Number of people living with HIV/AIDS	92

The Health of Mothers and Children

The health of mothers and children is an important measure of the overall health of a community. Ensuring that children get a healthy start and learn healthy behaviors has many long-term benefits.

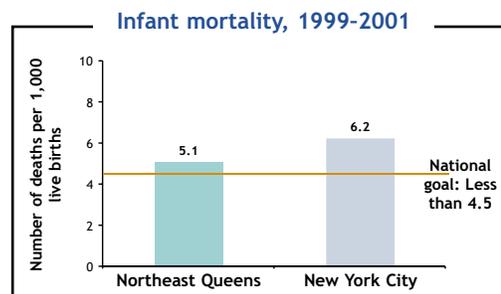
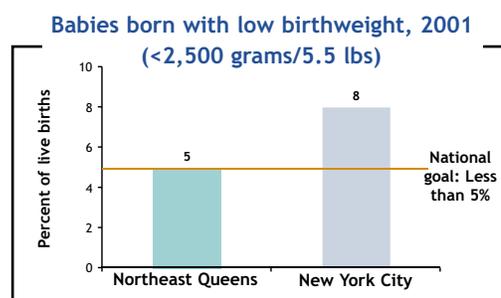
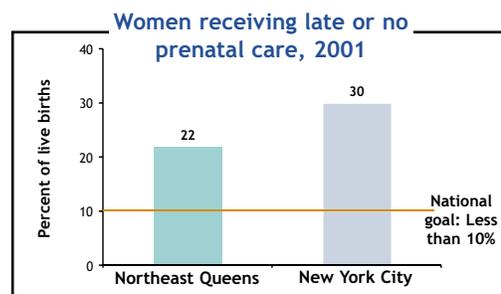
Maternal and infant health

Three important measures of maternal and infant health are:

1. Early prenatal care (care initiated in the first trimester)
2. Low birthweight, which increases the risk for many health problems
3. Infant mortality (deaths of babies under one year of age)

Northeast Queens is better than the citywide average for all these indicators.

Healthy babies start with healthy mothers who get early, regular, and high-quality prenatal care.



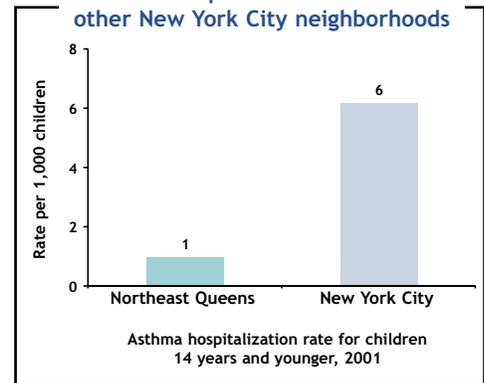
Asthma can be controlled. All children with asthma should have a written “Asthma Action Plan” to help them and their parents know which medicines to take and when to take them, how to avoid asthma triggers, and when to get medical care.

Children’s health

Asthma

Asthma affects a large number of New York City’s children and is a leading cause of missed school days and hospitalizations. The asthma hospitalization rate in Northeast Queens is lower than in New York City as a whole. There were 19 asthma hospitalizations among children in Northeast Queens in 2001.

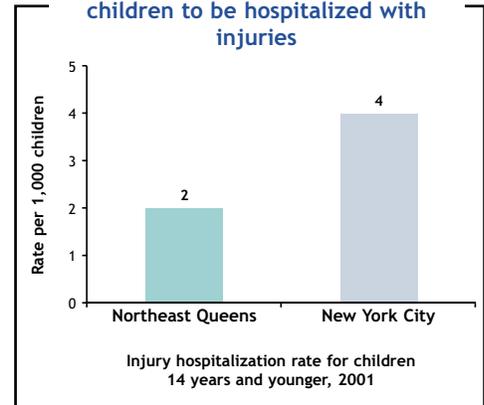
Northeast Queens has a lower asthma hospitalization rate than other New York City neighborhoods



Injuries

Injury is a preventable threat to children’s health. In 2001, 31 children in Northeast Queens were hospitalized with injuries, including those from falls, burns, and motor-vehicle crashes. The rate of hospitalization for injuries among children in Northeast Queens is lower than the citywide average.

Children in Northeast Queens are less likely than other New York City children to be hospitalized with injuries

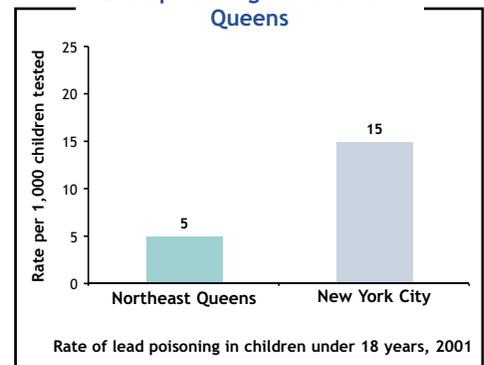


All children in New York City must have a blood lead test at 1 and 2 years of age.

Lead poisoning

Lead can cause neurologic, learning, and behavioral problems, and lowered intelligence. While the number of lead-poisoned children in New York City has decreased over the past decade, the goal is to eliminate lead poisoning by preventing children’s exposure to lead paint and other sources of lead. There were 10 children newly diagnosed with lead poisoning in Northeast Queens in 2001 (defined as blood levels over 10 µg/dL).

Lead poisoning in Northeast Queens



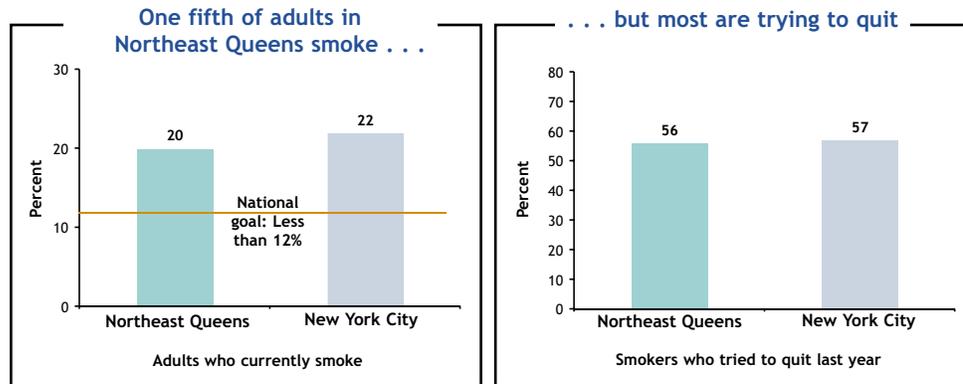
Targets for Prevention

Promoting healthy behaviors and reducing risks

Smoking

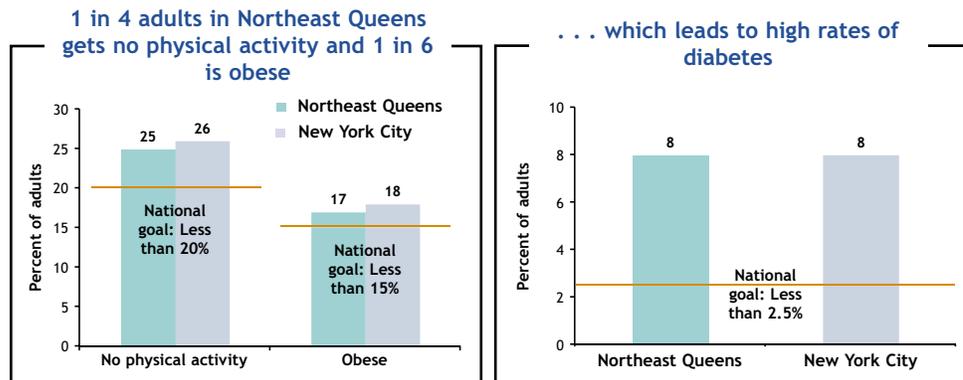
Smoking causes heart disease, stroke, emphysema, lung cancer, and many other illnesses. Currently, one fifth of adults in Northeast Queens smoke. Most, however, want to quit, and more than half tried last year. There are a number of highly effective strategies, including medication (such as the nicotine patch) and counseling, to help smokers quit.

Stopping smoking is the most important thing smokers can do to improve their health.



Exercise, obesity, and diabetes

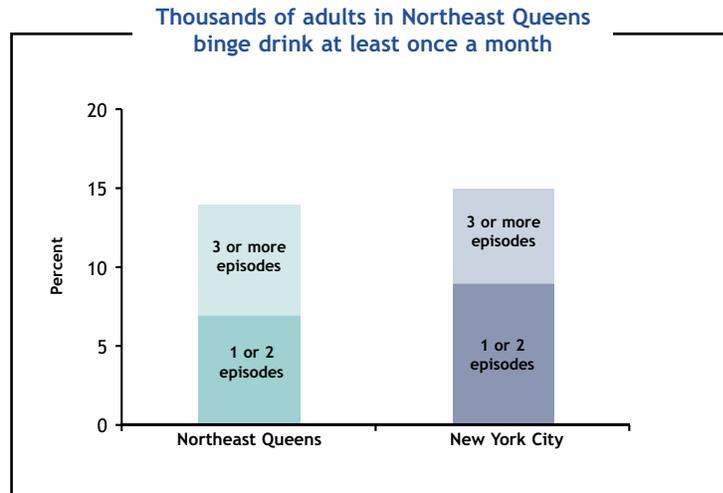
As New Yorkers exercise less and eat more, we are becoming more overweight. Being overweight puts people at risk for heart disease and many other health problems, especially diabetes. Diabetes is a chronic illness that can lead to heart attack, blindness, kidney failure, and amputations. Many New Yorkers are not getting enough exercise and are obese.* Even modest increases in exercise and reductions in weight can reduce the risk of diabetes by more than half.



* The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults get either moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes, 5 or more times per week, or vigorous exercise for at least 20 minutes, 3 or more times per week. Obesity is defined by someone's "weight for height" – otherwise known as the "body mass index" or BMI – being over 30. "Overweight" is defined by a BMI over 25. Everyone should aim for a BMI less than 25. For example, a 5'10" man who weighs less than 175 lbs and a 5'4" woman who weighs less than 145 lbs have BMIs less than 25. To calculate BMI, visit www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/bmi-adult.htm.

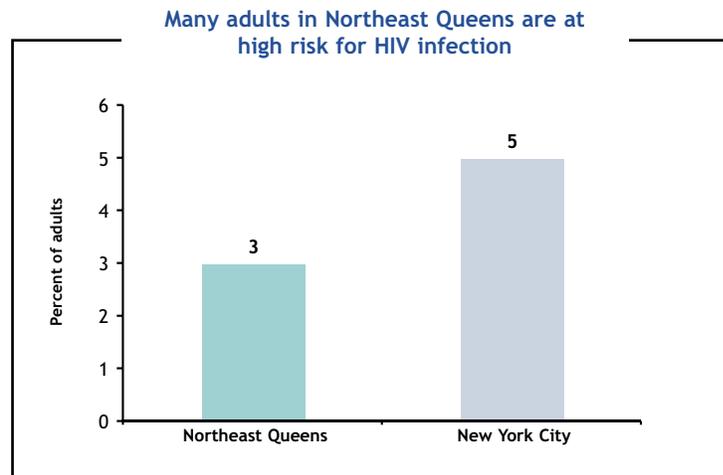
Alcohol

Heavy drinking is responsible for many preventable illnesses, injuries, and deaths, including those caused by motor-vehicle crashes and other accidents, liver disease, and cancer. One pattern of alcohol misuse that can lead to violence and health problems is “binge” drinking (consuming 5 or more drinks on one occasion).



Risk behaviors for HIV

Many adults in Northeast Queens report at least one of the following behaviors that put them at risk for HIV: using injection drugs, having unprotected anal intercourse, exchanging sex or drugs for money, or having a sexually transmitted disease.



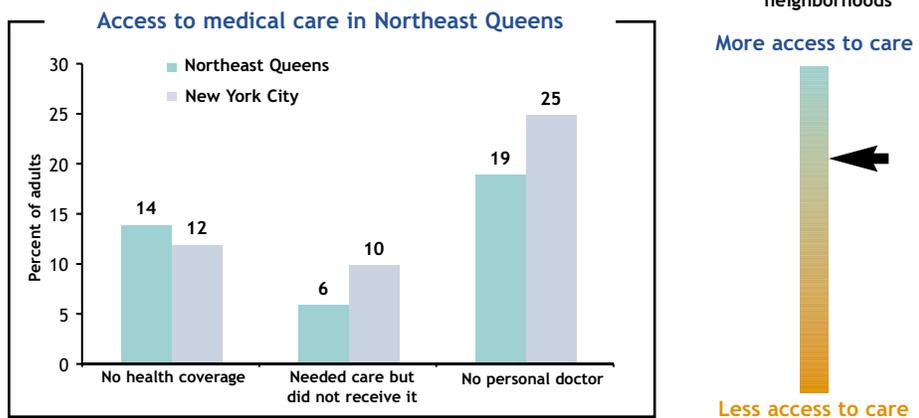
Medical Care

Opportunities for prevention

The medical community – doctors, nurses, counselors, and others – can help prevent illness. Screening and treatment for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and cancer can prolong life. Flu and pneumonia vaccinations prevent many hospitalizations and deaths. Counseling to quit smoking or control drinking is highly effective and helps people who want to improve their health.

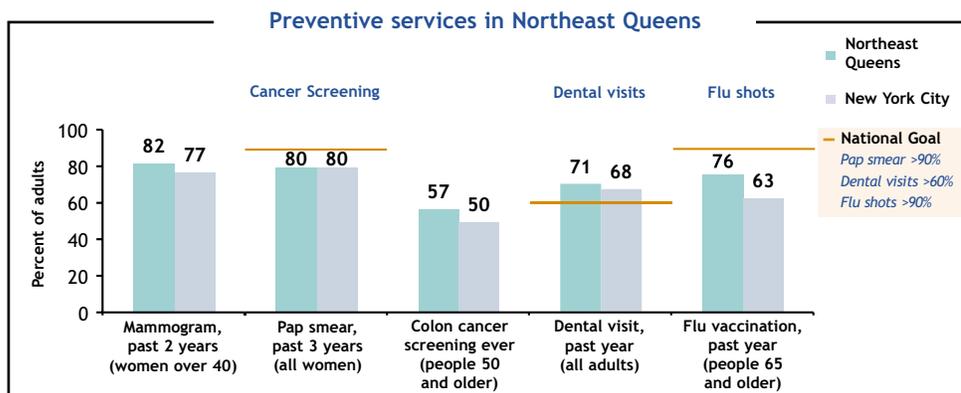
Access to care

Preventing and treating illness depends on people’s ability to access high-quality medical care. This means having health insurance and a “medical home” – a personal doctor or nurse practitioner. Many Northeast Queens residents have poor access to medical care: about 9,500 people report no current health care coverage; 4,000 people did not get needed medical care in the past year; and 13,500 people do not have a personal doctor.



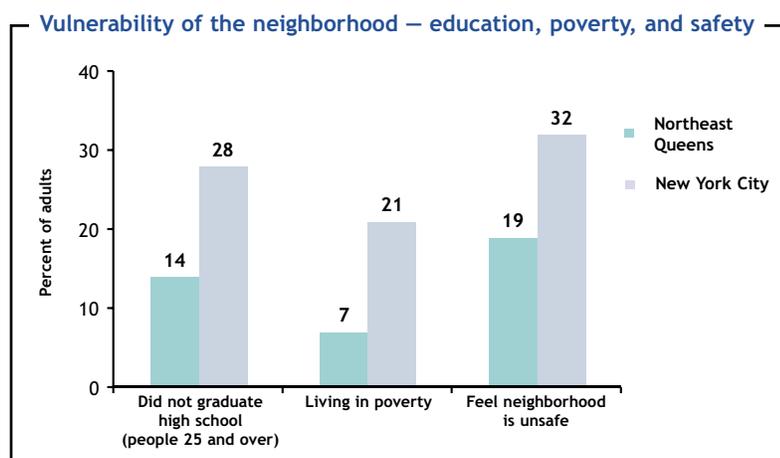
Cancer screening and other preventive services

Cancer screening and other clinical services can prevent or reduce the severity of many illnesses. This graph shows how rates in Northeast Queens compare to New York City as a whole and to some national goals.



Vulnerable Populations

People's ability to increase healthy behaviors and improve their health is influenced by the conditions in which they live. A healthy environment that includes adequate housing, neighborhood resources such as supermarkets and parks, community services such as daycare, and safety, is essential in preventing disease and promoting health. Northeast Queens has a low poverty rate, and most people who live there feel their neighborhood is safe. There are still many residents, however, whose health is at risk due to poor social and economic conditions.



Technical notes

Data sources

Mortality, years of potential life lost, infant mortality, low birthweight, late prenatal care: NYCDOHMH/Office of Vital Statistics; Self-reported health status, depression/anxiety symptoms, smoking, exercise, obesity, diabetes, alcohol, drugs/risky sexual practices, access to medical care, clinical preventive services, neighborhood safety: NYCDOHMH/Division of Epidemiology/NYC Community Health Survey 2002; Lead poisoning: NYCDOHMH Lead Poisoning Prevention Program; Hospitalizations: New York State Department of Health/Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System; Population (total, race/ethnicity, foreign-born, percent in poverty, education): New York City Department of City Planning/Census 2000 data; National goals: US Department of Health and Human Services/Healthy People 2010; National self-reported health status: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2001, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

How the report card was calculated

Ranks in each category were computed by combining several standardized (z-scores) measures within the following categories: *General health*: Self-reported health status and all-cause mortality rate; *Maternal and child health*: All "Health of Mothers and Children" indices; *Infectious disease*: People living with HIV, pneumonia and influenza mortality, tuberculosis incidence, and gonorrhea incidence; *Chronic diseases*: Mortality and hospital admissions for heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and lung disease; *Prevention in doctors' offices*: All listed indices; *Access to medical care*: All listed indices.

All rates are age-standardized to the NCHS Year 2000 standard. Mortality rates do not include residents of NYC who died outside the city. Infant mortality rates are 3-year averages, 1999-2001. Death rates are rounded to the nearest whole number; however, percentage differences between neighborhood and NYC rates are calculated based on more precise values.

Geographic definitions of neighborhoods are based on zip code aggregations (from the United Hospital Fund, New York, NY).

For more information on data collection and analysis, including detailed tables, please visit www.nyc.gov/health.

Cover Photograph: Near Bayside Marina, Queens. Photo by Don Weiss.

Community Health Profile for Northeast Queens

Reports on 41 other New York City neighborhoods are available from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

by visiting: nyc.gov/health

by e-mailing: profiles@health.nyc.gov

or by writing to:

Community Health Profiles
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Division of Epidemiology
125 Worth Street, Room 315, CN-6
New York, NY 10013

For more information about the health issues covered in this report, please call 311.

Inside

Community-specific information on . . .

Overall health and census data	2
Leading causes of death and hospitalization	4
The health of mothers and children	6
Behaviors affecting health: smoking, exercise, alcohol use, and others	8
Opportunities for disease prevention in clinical settings: cancer screening, dental care, vaccinations	10
Social and demographic issues affecting health	11



NYC Community Health Profiles

nyc.gov/health

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Division of Epidemiology, Bureau of Epidemiology Services, 125 Worth Street, CN-6, New York, NY 10013

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH
Commissioner of Health and Mental Hygiene

Copyright©2003
The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
NYC Community Health Profiles feature information about 42 neighborhoods in New York City.

To contact NYC Community Health Profiles, e-mail profiles@health.nyc.gov.

Suggested citation: Karpati A, Lu X, Mostashari F, Thorpe L, Frieden TR. The Health of Northeast Queens. NYC Community Health Profiles 2003;1(4):1-12.