

## Cancer-Related Risk Behaviors in Connecticut Residents

---

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an annual health survey that allows us to monitor health risk behaviors in the population. Several cancer risk factors may be examined through the BRFSS, including tobacco use, excessive alcohol consumption, diet, physical activity, and obesity. In addition, use of preventive services such as cancer screening can be explored. BRFSS data from 2018 reveal the following trends.<sup>vii</sup>

- Smoking prevalence in Connecticut adults is in decline. In 2018, 12.2% of adults in the state were current smokers, compared with 17.1% in 2011. However, rates among Blacks (18.2%) and Hispanics (16.5%) and the uninsured (19.7%) were significantly higher than the state average
- The 2018 CT BRFSS results showed that 19.6% of adults in Connecticut reported having tried e-cigarettes in their lifetime, and according to the 2019 Connecticut School Health Survey (CT YRBSS), current use of electronic vapor products rose to 27.0% among high school students<sup>viii</sup>
- In 2018, 22.8% of adults reported no leisure time physical activities or exercises, including running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking within the last 30 days. This was a slight increase from the 2016 rate of 21%. A higher percentage (30.4 %) of Black and Hispanic adults reported no leisure time physical activities
- In 2018, 28.4% (up from 27% in 2016) of men and 26.4% (up from 25%) of women in Connecticut were obese (body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher). While the obesity rate for non-Hispanic whites was 26.1%, for Blacks the rate was 36.5% and for Hispanics the rate was 31.1%
- In 2018, 18.8% of Connecticut adults reported binge drinking within the past 30 days, an increase from the 2016 rate of 17%
- In 2018, about 16% of Connecticut women ages 18 or older reported not having a pap test in the past 3 years
- In 2018, about 78.1% of Connecticut adults ages 50 – 75 had ever had a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy, and 14.8% had had a fecal occult blood test in the past year
- In 2018, 33.8% of Connecticut men aged 40 or older reported having a PSA test within the past 2 years. Rates were highest in men aged 55 and over (46.3%), non-Hispanic white men (37.1%), and men with a household income of \$75,000 or more (37.0%)

## Resources

- Connecticut 2019 State Health Assessment, Chapter 6: Chronic Disease. [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/dph/state\\_health\\_planning/SHA-SHIP/HCT2025/SHA-Chapters/6\\_Chronic-Diseases-chapter\\_CT\\_SHA\\_Report\\_Final060520-6.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/dph/state_health_planning/SHA-SHIP/HCT2025/SHA-Chapters/6_Chronic-Diseases-chapter_CT_SHA_Report_Final060520-6.pdf).
- Swett, K., Gonsalves, L., and Mueller, L.M. 2019. Cancer in Connecticut. Hartford, CT: Connecticut Department of Public Health. Health and Surveillance Section, Connecticut Tumor Registry. Cancer in Connecticut. A Report on the Burden of Cancer in the State. March 2019. [CancerInConnecticut2019.pdf](#). Updated with 2014-2018 data.
- U.S. Cancer Statistics: The Official Federal Cancer Statistics. Data Visualizations. Connecticut. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Cancer Institute. [www.cdc.gov/cancer/dataviz](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dataviz),
- The National Cancer Database (NCDB). NCDB Public Benchmark Reports
- Access Public NCDB Benchmark Reports
- Cancer Cases Reported to the NCDB by Tumor Type and AJCC Stage
- Navigation Guide for Public NCDB Benchmark Reports
- Access Public NCDB Benchmark Reports
- Cancer Cases Reported to the NCDB by Tumor Type and AJCC Stage
- Navigation Guide for Public NCDB Benchmark Reports
- AccessHealthCT. Disparities and Social Determinants of Health in Connecticut. February 2021. [https://agency.accesshealthct.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/10811\\_01\\_AHCT\\_Disparities\\_Report\\_V4.pdf](https://agency.accesshealthct.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/10811_01_AHCT_Disparities_Report_V4.pdf)

---

i Cancer Statistics Center By State. American Cancer Society. <https://cancerstatisticscenter.cancer.org/#/state/Connecticut>

ii U.S. Cancer Statistics. CDC. <https://gis.cdc.gov/Cancer/USCS/#/AtAGlance/>

iii State Cancer Profiles. NIH. NCI. <https://www.statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/deathrates/index>.

iv Cancer Facts and Figures 2021. ACS. <file:///C:/Users/lhhog/Downloads/cancer-facts-and-figures-2021.pdf>

v United States Cancer Statistics: Data Visualizations. CDC. <https://gis.cdc.gov/Cancer/USCS/>

vi United States Cancer Statistics: Data Visualizations. CDC. <https://gis.cdc.gov/Cancer/USCS/>

vii Zheng X., Jorge C. (2021) Health Indicators and Risk Behaviors in Connecticut: 2018. Results of Connecticut Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), Connecticut Department of Public Health, Hartford, Connecticut ([www.ct.gov/dph/BRFSS](http://www.ct.gov/dph/BRFSS)). Zheng X., Jorge C. (2021) Health Indicators and Risk Behaviors in Connecticut: 2018. Results of Connecticut Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), Connecticut Department of Public Health, Hartford, Connecticut ([www.ct.gov/dph/BRFSS](http://www.ct.gov/dph/BRFSS)).