



# HEALTHY POPULATIONS

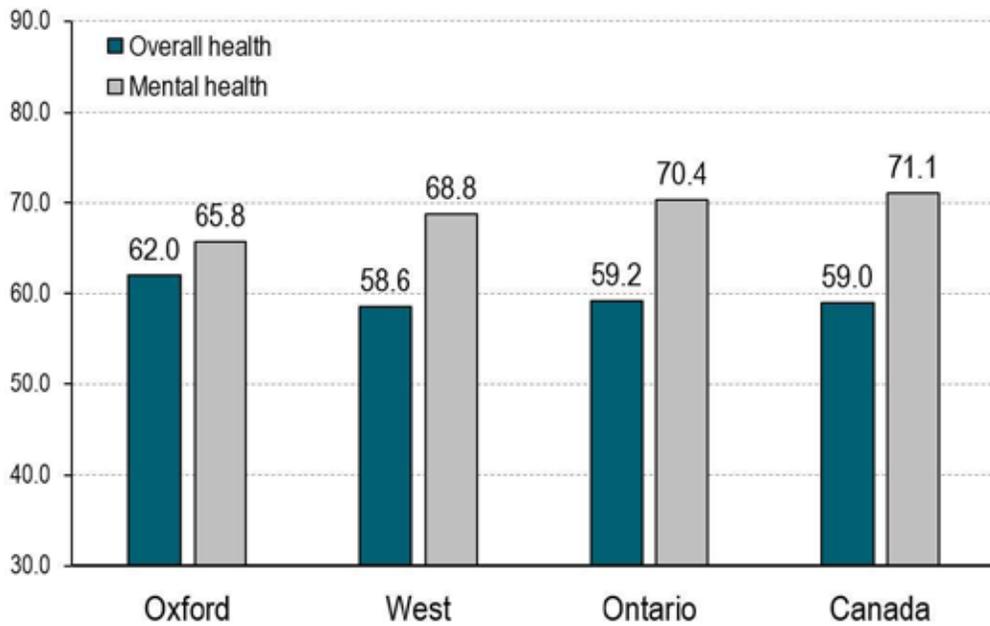
The Healthy Populations domain considers the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of the population. It examines life expectancy, lifestyle and behaviours, and the circumstances that influence health such as access to health care.

Healthy Populations captures both the overall health of the population (“health status”) as well as factors that influence health (“health determinants”). This broad perspective is used because peoples’ lifestyles and behaviours are constrained and shaped by broader social factors such as how food is distributed and priced, how houses are constructed and located, how urban transportation is designed, how easily people can access health care and recreational services, and how we interact with the natural environment.

## SELF-REPORTED HEALTH

In terms of overall health, 6 in 10 residents of Oxford County say their overall health is very good or excellent (62.0%), and even more residents report that their mental health is very good or excellent (65.8%). In fact, for overall health, the percentage in Oxford County is higher than percentages reported in the West Region (58.6%), in the province (59.2%), and across the country (59.0%).

## PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE RATING THEIR MENTAL HEALTH AS VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT IS HIGHER THAN THEIR RATINGS OF OVERALL HEALTH



However, the percentage reporting very good or excellent mental health in Oxford County is lower compared to anywhere else in West Region (68.8%), or compared to other places provincially (70.4%) and nationally (71.1%). In other words, these numbers suggest that almost one-third of residents in Oxford County feel their overall and mental health is only “good” – or worse. In this sense, resident’s ratings of their health, especially their mental health, could be an area of concern.

people without any health or activity-related limitations

<b>OXFORD</b>	<b>65.9%</b>
<b>WEST</b>	<b>64.8%</b>
<b>ONTARIO</b>	<b>67.9%</b>
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>78.5%</b>



teens who are smoking occasionally or daily

<b>OXFORD</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
<b>WEST</b>	<b>6.0%</b>
<b>ONTARIO</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>7.7%</b>

Approximately two-thirds of the residents in Oxford County report they are living without any health or activity limitations (65.9%). This percentage is quite similar to the rate in the West Region (64.8%) as well as for Ontario overall (67.9%). However, the percentage for Canada overall is significantly higher (78.5%) than across Ontario, including Oxford County, indicating that many fewer residents in Oxford County are living without health-related limitations in their day- to-day living. Looking at these results in another way suggests that approximately one-third of residents do have some limitations that might be interfering with the quality of their lives.

The incidence of self-reported diabetes has been rapidly increasing across Ontario in recent years. Currently, 7.4% of Ontarians report living with diabetes. In Oxford County, the incidence of self-reported diabetes is identical to the national level (6.7%), which is markedly lower than the percentage in West Region (7.3%) and the province overall. Both locally and provincially, the growing incidence of diabetes is a concern because it is a critical marker of other health-related issues such as cardiovascular disease, and kidney and vision problems.

### HEALTH-RELATED BEHAVIOUR

Over the past decade, the percentage of individuals across the country immunized against influenza each year has remained relatively unchanged at approximately one-third of the population. The immunization rate in Oxford County is notably higher (44.8%) than in West Region (37.8%) and in Ontario (35.4%). National trends indicate that a greater percentage of older adults and children tend to get immunized than young and middle-aged adults. The slightly larger percentages of both of these age groups in Oxford County than elsewhere in the province could explain in part the higher immunization rate.

Smoking is widely recognized as an unhealthy behaviour associated with a variety of illnesses that could otherwise be prevented. Preventing and reducing smoking at an early age, when such behaviour typically is adopted, is a strategy that ensures better health in later life.

Smoking rates among teens (aged 12 to 19 years) have been steadily decreasing across Ontario for several years. In Oxford County, only 1 in 100 teens (0.9%) report smoking occasionally or daily, which is one of the lowest rates in both Ontario (5.8%) and Canada (7.7%). This is good news and points to better overall health for young people as they enter adulthood.

## HEALTH CARE ACCESS

Having access to a regular health physician, such as a family doctor, is a useful indicator of the capacity and appropriateness of the primary health care system. Access to a family doctor is a more effective means of sustaining good health than is the episodic use of emergency care.

The vast majority of residents of Oxford County have access to a regular health physician (95.1%), which is 10% higher than that in Canada overall (85.1%). In fact, access to a regular family physician is generally higher for all Ontarians (92.5%).

Considering all of the various health behaviours and resources available to people, life expectancy provides a sense of overall population health based on quantity of life rather than quality of life. It helps to inform how the health of Canadians is shifting as improvements to systems and services are made. Life expectancy (in years from birth) in Oxford County is 81.1 years, which is slightly shorter than the national average (81.8 years) and about one year shorter than the provincial average (82.3 years). As a broad marker of population health, more favourable conditions and health care access can contribute to longer life expectancy in Oxford County.