



Adults with Disabilities: Population in Focus Report

**Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance
System (BRFSS), 2023**

December 2025

Introduction – Adults with Disabilities

This report focuses on health-related factors and behaviors experienced by adults who self-reported having any disability and adults who reported having no disability, compared to the overall statewide rate.

The Vermont Department of Health acknowledges that data presented in this report are driven by complex upstream factors, including social, economic, and environmental inequities. Data on the prevalence of certain indicators may be influenced by differences in age distribution across disability status. We are continually working to further incorporate information highlighting the social determinants of health and informed by the communities and partners we seek to serve.

In the 2023 BRFSS, disability indicators included serious difficulty with one or more of the following:

- walking or climbing stairs,
- concentrating or making decisions,
- hearing,
- seeing,
- dressing or bathing,
- or because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition having difficulty doing errands alone.

Overall, in 2023, 28% of Vermonters reported having any disability.

Methodology

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a telephone survey conducted annually among adults aged 18 and older. The Vermont BRFSS is completed by the Vermont Department of Health in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). All U.S. states, Washington D.C., and most U.S. territories participate in the BRFSS. BRFSS surveys are completed by approximately 7,000 adults each year, from across the state. Completion of the BRFSS depends on a participant's ability to independently complete an over-the-phone survey with a personal cellphone or on a landline phone in a private residence. Adults who are incarcerated, living in group housing, without a personal phone, or who have hearing impairments or other physical, emotional, or cognitive disabilities that preclude their ability to independently complete such a survey may not be adequately represented in this data. Results are weighted to be representative of the entire adult population.

Throughout this report, all estimates reported represent percentages. To ensure statistical reliability and decrease instances of data suppression, estimates represent the average of 2 years of data combined. Statistical significance is calculated by comparing the 95% confidence intervals of two or more values. A 95% confidence interval is a range of values and can vary due to the size of a particular population or how consistently participants responded to an item. All comparisons are made to the overall statewide estimate, and statistically significant differences are noted. Sometimes, when comparing the responses of two or more groups, the overall percentage may look very different, but the two numbers are not statistically different. Other times, the two values may be very close but differ statistically. While this report notes statistical differences, we encourage you to consider meaningful differences: does the disparity merit a targeted intervention, show a real change in health, or otherwise mean something important to the community (statistics aside).

For more information on the BRFSS and to see other reports, please visit the Vermont Department of Health BRFSS webpage at: <https://www.HealthVermont.gov/BRFSS>

Demographics

Disability Status	N	%
Any disability	2,180	28
No disability	6,508	72

BRFSS 2023 results

N = Unweighted number of respondents; % = Weighted percent

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Health Status Indicators

	VT	Disability	No Disability
General health fair or poor	14	35*	6*
Health insurance coverage (age 18-64)	95	95	95
Have a personal health care provider	91	93	91
Delayed health care due to cost, past year	8	12*	6*
Experienced physical symptoms as a result of how treated based on race	2	5*	1*
Fell in past year, (age 45+)	27	42*	21*
Fall in past year resulting in injury, (age 45+)	34	45*	25*

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

. = Too few responses to report; * = Statistically different compared to VT overall

Quality of Life

	VT	Disability	No Disability
Physical health not good	12	31*	6*
Mental health not good	16	34*	9*

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

. = Too few responses to report; * = Statistically different compared to VT overall

Chronic Conditions

	VT	Disability	No Disability
Arthritis	29	49*	22*
Asthma	11	19*	9*
Cancer (non-skin)	10	16*	8*
Cardiovascular disease	8	18*	5*
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)	7	15*	3*
Depressive disorder	26	45*	19*
Diabetes	9	16*	6*
High blood cholesterol	34	42*	31
Hypertension	33	47*	28*
Kidney disease	3	7*	2*
Long-term COVID-19 symptoms	11	17*	9
Pre-diabetes	10	13*	9
Skin cancer	7	9	6

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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Risk Factors and Behaviors

	VT	Disability	No Disability
No leisure time physical activity	20	34*	14*
Rates community as slightly or not safe to walk	12	17*	9
Has a loaded firearm in the home	17	22	16
Rarely or never wear a seatbelt	3	5*	2
Illness or symptom was caused or made worse by air quality, mold, pets, furnishings, or excessive heat or cold in home, past year	9	16*	6*
Had at least one sunburn, past year	38	28*	42*

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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Vermont Department of Health

Substance Use – Alcohol and Cannabis

	VT	Disability	No Disability
Drink any alcohol, past month	61	48*	65*
Binge drinking, past month	16	15	17
Heavy drinking, past month	8	8	8
Driving under the influence of alcohol, past month	3	3	3

	VT	Disability	No Disability
Cannabis use, past 30 days	24	29*	22
Driving under the influence of cannabis, past month	19	19	20

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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Substance Use - Tobacco

	VT	Disability	No Disability
Current cigarette smoking	11	18*	8*
Current e-cigarette use	5	8*	4
Current smokeless tobacco use	2	3	2
Attempted to quit smoking, past year	47	52	43

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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Vermont Department of Health

Preventative Behaviors and Screenings

	VT	Disability	No Disability
Routine doctor visit	77	81	76
Meets physical activity recommendations	67	53*	72*
Meets strength building recommendations	42	37*	44
Had cholesterol screening	86	88	85
Had HIV screening, ever	37	36	38
Had HIV screening, past year	6	7	6
Ate fish caught in local waters, past month	6	7	5

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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Immunizations

	VT	Disability	No Disability
Flu shot, past year (age 65+)	70	68	71
Pneumonia shot, (age 65+)	70	73	68
Shingles shot, past ten year	59	56	61
COVID shot	91	89	92

All numbers are percentages.

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Vermont Department of Health

For Questions and More Information

Email: AHS.VDHBRFSS@Vermont.gov

Web: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/stats/population-health-surveys-data/behavioral-risk-factor-surveillance-system-brfss>

Social: @HealthVermont