



Older Adults: Population in Focus Report

Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2023

December 2025

Introduction – Older Adults

This report focuses on health-related factors and behaviors experienced by adults aged 18-64, 65-79, and 80 and older, compared to the overall statewide rate. Since 2013, Vermont has experienced an increase in its older adult population, and it is projected that by 2030 one third of Vermonters will be over the age of 60.

The Vermont Department of Health acknowledges that data presented in this report are driven by complex upstream factors, including social, economic, and environmental inequities. 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.

Overall, in 2023, 28% of Vermonters were aged 65 or older.

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

Age	N	%
18-64	5465	72
65-79	2886	22
80+	527	6

N = Unweighted number of respondents; % = Weighted percent
BRFSS 2023 results.
Vermont Department of Health

Health Status Indicators

	VT	18-64	65-79	80+
General health fair or poor	14	13	15	23*
Have a personal health care provider	91	89*	97*	99*
Delayed health care due to cost, past year	8	10*	3*	.
Experienced physical symptoms as a result of how treated based on race	2	3	2	.
Fell in past year, 45+	27	24	31	35
Fall in past year resulting in injury, 45+	34	38	32	25

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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

Quality of Life

	VT	18-64	65-79	80+
Physical health not good	12	12	16*	12
Mental health not good	16	19*	9*	.
Has a disability	28	24*	34*	52*

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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

Chronic Conditions

	VT	18-64	65-79	80+
Arthritis	29	19*	52*	60*
Asthma	11	11	13	5*
Cancer (non-skin)	10	5*	21*	30*
Cardiovascular disease	8	4*	17*	25*
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	6	4*	12*	12*
Depressive disorder	26	29	19*	16*
Diabetes	9	6*	16*	18*
High blood cholesterol	34	27*	50*	44*
Hypertension	33	24*	52*	62*
Kidney disease	3	2*	6*	9*
Long-term covid symptoms	11	12	9	10
Pre-diabetes	10	8*	16*	12
Skin cancer	7	3*	16*	24*

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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

Risk Factors and Behaviors

	VT	18-64	65-79	80+
No leisure time physical activity	20	18	23	34*
Rates community as slightly or not safe to walk	12	14	6*	.
Has a loaded firearm in the home	17	18	18	.
Rarely or never wear a seatbelt	3	3	3	.
Illness or symptom was caused or made worse by air quality, mold, pets, furnishings, or excessive heat or cold in home, past year	9	10	9	.
Had at least one sunburn, past year	38	48*	19*	.

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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

Vermont Department of Health

Substance Use – Alcohol and Cannabis

	VT	18-64	65-79	80+
Drink any alcohol, past month	61	64	56	45*
Binge drinking, past month	16	21*	6*	.
Heavy drinking, past month	8	9	7	3*
Driving under the influence of alcohol, past month	3	3	1*	.

	VT	18-64	65-79	80+
Cannabis use, past 30 days	24	29*	12*	.
Driving under the influence of cannabis, past month	19	20	15	.

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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

Substance Use – Tobacco

	VT	18-64	65-79	80+
Current cigarette smoking	11	13	8*	.
Current e-cigarette use	5	7	.	.
Current smokeless tobacco use	2	2	.	.
Attempted to quit smoking, past year	47	50	38	.

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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

Vermont Department of Health

Preventative Behaviors and Screenings

	VT	18-64	65-79	80+
Routine doctor visit	77	72*	89*	92*
Meets physical activity recommendations	67	67	70	61
Meets strength building recommendations	42	42	44	39
Had cholesterol screening	86	82*	96*	96*
Had HIV screening, ever	37	45*	21*	6*
Had HIV screening, past year	6	9*	1*	.
Ate fish caught in local waters, past month	6	5	6	.

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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

Immunizations

	VT	18-64	65-79	80+
COVID shot	91	89	95*	98*

	VT	65-79	80+
Flu shot, past year (age 65+)	70	69	72
Pneumonia shot, (age 65+)	70	70	71

	VT	50-64	65-79	80+
Shingles shot, past ten year	59	53*	67*	59

All numbers are percentages.

BRFSS 2023 Results

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

For Questions and More Information

Email: AHS.VDHBRFSS@Vermont.gov

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

Social: @HealthVermont