

A PORTRAIT OF

# NEW YORK CITY 2018

WELL-BEING IN THE FIVE BOROUGHS AND THE GREATER METRO AREA



## HEALTH IN NEW YORK CITY

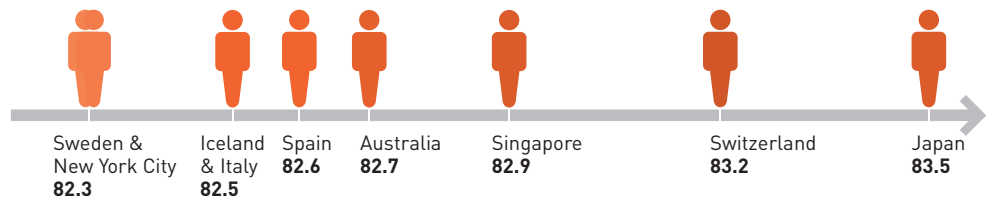
Consider this fact: If New York City were a country, it would be tied for eighth place with Sweden for longevity.

**Health** is one of three areas, along with education and standard of living, that make up the American Human Development Index, used to measure the well-being of New Yorkers in *A Portrait of New York City*.

Living a long and healthy life is humankind's cardinal capability, and health is both a cause and a consequence of a person's overall well-being. Compared to the country as a whole, New York City is well ahead in terms of life expectancy at birth. A baby born today in the city can expect to live 82.3 years, surpassing the average US life expectancy by three years.

### Life Expectancy Comparison

#### LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (YEARS)



Measure of America's analysis of disparities in average life expectancy across different places and demographic groups is informed by two key concepts. The first is the notion of the social determinants of health, or the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work, and age. The second is health equity, or health differences that are avoidable and unfair and which adversely affect a socially disadvantaged group.

*A Portrait of New York City* examines life expectancies by gender, by nativity, and by race and ethnicity, as well as by community district. Life expectancy at birth is higher in New York City than in the greater metro area, the state, or the country as a whole. Because New York City has a high degree of residential segregation, life expectancy patterns by race and ethnicity are reflected in geographic patterns.

### STRIKING FINDINGS IN HEALTH FROM A PORTRAIT OF NEW YORK CITY

- New York City women outlive their male counterparts by about five years, on average. Female life expectancy is 85.3 years, and male life expectancy is 80.2 years. The gender gap is widest in the Bronx, 6.3 years, and narrowest in Manhattan, 4.4 years.

- Foreign-born New Yorkers enjoy a commanding life expectancy lead over US-born New Yorkers, nearly six years. Over one-third of New York City residents are foreign born, and their health outcomes have a powerful effect on the city’s average life expectancy.
- More than a decade separates the life expectancy of the city’s Asian residents, 89.3 years, and its black residents, 79.2 years. Latinos and whites fall between the two.

### Life Expectancy by Borough and Race and Ethnicity

|               | OVERALL     | ASIAN       | BLACK       | LATINO      | WHITE       |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>NYC</b>    | <b>82.3</b> | <b>89.3</b> | <b>79.2</b> | <b>83.5</b> | <b>82.6</b> |
| BRONX         | 80.4        | 94.1        | 78.5        | 82.7        | 79.5        |
| BROOKLYN      | 82.0        | 88.9        | 80.2        | 82.5        | 82.8        |
| MANHATTAN     | 84.2        | 89.8        | 76.6        | 84.8        | 82.6        |
| QUEENS        | 85.1        | 90.3        | 82.6        | 89.2        | 83.5        |
| STATEN ISLAND | 81.1        | 90.4        | 78.2        | 82.3        | 80.9        |

Source: Measure of America calculations using mortality data from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and population data from CDC Wonder and the US Census Bureau, 2010–2014.

## POLICY LEVERS FOR CHANGE

- **POVERTY:** Poverty harms health in several ways. People living in poverty are less able to insulate themselves from health risks, such as dilapidated housing, exposure to pollution, work-place hazards, and neighborhood violence, and as a result experience higher levels of chronic diseases. They also have less access to high-quality medical care and generally don’t have the money to pay for health-enhancing supports like gym memberships, therapy, or nutritionists.
- **RACISM:** The stress that anti-black racism creates can be difficult for people who are not black to understand, but its toll on black people’s health is very real. While education and affluence attenuate the impact of racism, they do not eliminate it. Affluent black families are more likely to live in poor neighborhoods than white families with similar or lower incomes, meaning that they are more likely to be exposed to the adverse neighborhood environments associated with poverty regardless of their earnings.
- **HEALTH-RISK BEHAVIORS:** Health-risk behaviors include smoking, excessive drinking, poor diet, and physical inactivity. People who want to get clean, lose weight, or take up exercise often require help in addressing factors like depression, stress, pain, and addiction that fuel their health-risk behaviors. Ultimately, structuring built environments so that the healthiest choice is also the easiest choice—the essence of “choice architecture”—is a job for society as a whole.

Click [here](#) to read *A Portrait of New York City 2018*. For more information, visit [www.measureofamerica.org](http://www.measureofamerica.org).