

Report Gives Kentuckians County Health Snapshots

Report Shows How Multiple Factors Can Influence Health

The first-ever County Health Rankings report released last week by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will provide Kentuckians a county-by-county snapshot of the overall health of their communities.

The County Health Rankings are the first to rank the overall health of the counties in all 50 states — more than 3,000 total — by using a standard formula to measure how healthy people are and how long they live. Counties receive two overall rankings, one for health outcomes — which represent how healthy a county is — and one for health factors — which looks at what influences the health of the county. Boone County ranked as having the healthiest residents in Kentucky, while Woodford County ranked highest in good health factors, according to a new report.

The online report, available at www.countyhealthrankings.org, includes a snapshot of each county in Kentucky with a color-coded map comparing each county's overall health ranking. Researchers used five measures to assess the level of overall health or "health outcomes" for Kentucky by county: the rate of people dying before age 75; the percent of people who report being in fair or poor health; the numbers of days people report being in poor physical and poor mental health; and the rate of low-birthweight infants.

The report then looks at factors that affect people's health within four categories: health behavior; clinical care; social and economic factors; and physical environment. Among the many health factors looked at were rates of adult smoking; adult obesity; binge drinking and teenage pregnancy; the number of uninsured, the availability of primary care providers and preventable hospital stays; rates of high school graduation; number of children in poverty; rates of violent crime; access to healthy foods; air pollution levels; and liquor store density.

For more information on Kentucky's county rankings, please visit www.countyhealthrankings.org.

New Wellness Hotline Taking Calls

The Kentucky Employees' Health Plan has a new wellness hotline. To get a quick and easy connection to all of your wellness needs call: 1-877-KEHP WELL

Hotline services include:

- Kentucky Quit Line
- Cooper Clayton Smoking Cessation
- Humana Health Assessment
- Health Coaching
- Disease Management

Why Weight KY
Virgin HealthMiles

Virgin HealthMiles Program Changes for 2010

Virgin HealthMiles participants have more chances to win cash prizes than last year. Participants now have 207 chances to win in the monthly “healthcash” drawing instead of 141. Here is the new prize breakdown: two \$500 winners, 30 \$250 winners, 75 \$100 winners, and 100 \$50 winners. The January winners will be announced in mid-February.

Monthly Fee Reminder

Beginning on participants' 2010 program anniversary date, the monthly fee will change as the special introductory offer is expiring. If a participant joined between September 2008 and January 2009 the rate change will be effective for their Feb. 1 charge. Back charges will not be applied.

For more information, visit <http://personnel.ky.gov/dei/vhm.htm>

Living Well: Learn Your Neighborhood Walk Score

By Kris Hayslett

Recently, someone sent me a link to a Web site that measures cities’ – and their neighborhoods’ – walkability. I visited the “Walk Score” Web site, typed in my address and received a score of 37 out of 100. I was shocked. I double-checked my neighborhood score because we have several parks, lots of walking trails and sidewalks. Then I realized that this Web site gets its score by measuring several different components.

The site determines an area as “walkable” if it has the following:

A center: Walkable neighborhoods have a discernable center, whether it's a shopping district, a main street or a public space.

Density: The neighborhood is compact enough for local businesses to flourish and for public transportation to run frequently.

Mixed income, mixed use: Housing is provided for everyone who works in the neighborhood: young and old, singles and families, rich and poor. Businesses and residences are located near one another.

Parks and public space: Plenty of public places are available for people to gather and play.

Pedestrian-centric design: Buildings are placed close to the street to cater to foot traffic, with parking lots relegated to the back.

Nearby schools and workplaces: Schools and workplaces are close enough that most residents can walk from their homes.

Walk Score evaluates your neighborhood and measures how easy it is to live a “car-lite lifestyle” based on the distance from your house to nearby amenities. The scores range from 0-100 with the individual rankings shown below:

90–100 = Walkers' Paradise: Most errands can be accomplished on foot, and many people get by without owning a car.

70–89 = Very Walkable: It's possible to get by without owning a car.

50–69 = Somewhat Walkable: Some stores and amenities are within walking distance, but many every day trips still require a bike, public transportation or car.

25–49 = Car-Dependent: Only a few destinations are within easy walking range. For most errands, driving or public transportation is a must.

0–24 = Car-Dependent (Driving only): Virtually no neighborhood destinations within walking range.

These scores are based only on distance to area amenities and do not represent terrain or aesthetic beauty of the area. We all know the more we move the better off we are. According to Walk Score, people who live in a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood weigh up to 7 pounds less, on average, than those who live in sprawling neighborhoods and are more dependent on car use. In addition, it says more compact or pedestrian-friendly areas have fewer car accidents, lower greenhouse gas emissions, increased transportation options, increased interaction or feeling of community and stronger local businesses.

Visit [Walk Score](#) to check out your neighborhood’s walkability rating. This site might also help you become more aware of your local environment and encourage you to search for ways to make your area more “walkable.”

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Do you follow proper e-mail etiquette when you send a message to a coworker? Some people reply to e-mail late or not at all. Some may use inappropriate language or take too long to make their point.

Follow these simple rules from Emailreplies.com ,and your e-mails will be professional, succinct and courteous.

Be concise and to the point. Don’t make an e-mail longer than it needs to be. Reading an e-mail is harder than reading a printed message, and a long e-mail can be very discouraging to read.

Address all concerns. And do your best to pre-empt further questions. Customers and coworkers will appreciate this thoughtfulness. If you don't, expect follow-up e-mails that will waste your time and cause you frustration.

Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. Poor writing style can give the wrong impression about you and muddle your message. And a spell check before you hit "send" is quick and easy.

Answer swiftly. People communicate by e-mail because they hope to get a fast reply. Try to respond by the end of a workday or at least within 24 hours. If your reply will be complicated, send a quick e-mail saying you got the message and need more time for a full reply. You will put your customers' minds at ease and earn their patience.

Don't be too casual. In business e-mails, avoid emoticons and abbreviations such as BTW (by the way). These are generally not appropriate for professional messages.

Also, remember never to write anything in e-mail that you wouldn't say to someone in person. E-mail is forever!