

BRISTOL-BURLINGTON HEALTH DISTRICT

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Health Department Releases 2006 Survey Results

In February 2006, the Bristol-Burlington Health District (BBHD) contracted with Center for Research and Public Policy (CRPP) to conduct a **telephone health survey** in Bristol. This survey was last done in Bristol in 2001.

The goal was to determine the health status and health practices of Bristol residents and to compare these to the 2001 survey. CRPP surveyors randomly contacted Bristol households and successfully interviewed 400 adult residents (18 years and over). The analysis was done by Katy Purviance, the state epidemiologist assigned to BBHD.

Participants answered questions on a variety of health issues including:

- Overweight & obesity
- Exercise & nutrition
- Tobacco and alcohol use
- Common adult health issues
- Emergency preparedness
- Adult vaccinations
- Health screenings
- Oral health
- Mental Health
- BBHD Services

The Bristol-Burlington Health District contracted with Center for Research and Public Policy (CRPP) to conduct telephone interviews of 400 Bristol residents.



A FULL SURVEY REPORT IS AVAILABLE!

The information provided by the survey will be used to plan, develop and improve local health programs, services and policies that address the specific health needs of our residents.

This news letter highlights only some of the most interesting information from the Bristol Adult Health Survey. A full report is available for review at the Bristol-Burlington Health District, at the public libraries and at the City of Bristol web site at www.ci.bristol.ct.us and BBHD web site at www.bbhd.org

Many thanks to all 400 Bristol residents who agreed to participate in this very important survey!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2006 HEALTH SURVEY

The Good News...

- ⇒ 84% had a checkup in the last year.
- ⇒ 81% had a dental exam in the last year.
- ⇒ 81% do not currently smoke cigarettes.
- ⇒ 76% ban smoking in the home.
- ⇒ 77% of those 60 and older had a flu shot in 2005.
- ⇒ 81% said they would evacuate in an emergency if asked by public officials.

The Bad News...

- ⇒ 65% of Bristol adults are either overweight or obese.
- ⇒ 34% of Bristol adults do not engage in any exercise.
- ⇒ Only 49% of those 65 & older have received pneumonia vaccine.
- ⇒ Only 33% currently have an emergency plan in place.
- ⇒ Only 52% had a carbon monoxide detector in their home.
- ⇒ Only 29% of persons 60 or older are aware that BBHD has an onsite senior dental clinic.

Overweight

Overweight and obesity affect the majority of Bristol residents. **Our study found that 65% of adults are overweight. Among this group, 28% are obese.**

Men were significantly more likely to be overweight than women, 66% vs. 50% and people aged 40-69 had the greatest likelihood of being obese. Thirty-one percent of people in that category were obese.

Exercise and Nutrition

Together, poor diet and lack of physical activity have been cited by experts as the second leading cause of death in the U.S. after tobacco use. Poor diet and lack of physical activity are responsible for over 300,000 deaths annually in the United States!

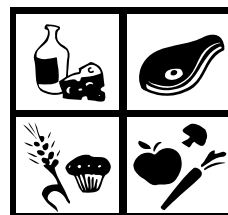
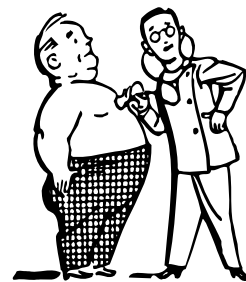
Bristol residents fared poorly on physical activity. One in three persons (34%) reported no physical activity in the previous month. This was significantly higher than both U.S. and Connecticut results (24% and 21%). Of those committed to exercising, 79% exercise for 30

This is a disturbing trend when compared to 2001 survey results that indicated 22% of Bristol adults were obese. The percentage of obese Bristol residents is higher than both the U.S. and Connecticut rates.

Overweight is associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, hypertension, high blood cholesterol, and certain cancers.

Overweight and obesity are determined by a mathematical equation known as Body Mass Index (BMI).

You can calculate your own BMI by taking your (weight in lbs. / height in inches²) x 703. A BMI of 18.5-24.9 is considered a healthy weight range, 25-29.9 is considered overweight, and a BMI of 30 or more is considered obese.



minutes at least three times a week. Even moderate exercise like walking, biking, yard work or anything else that causes a small increase in breathing or heart rate can have a large impact on our physical fitness. Check out Bristol walking paths and residential areas.

The National Institutes of Health recommends that adults consume 5 or *more* servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Many Americans consume more calories than they need without meeting recommended intakes for a number of nutrients. Adults should choose meals and snacks that are high in nutrients, but low to moderate in

calories; that is, meeting nutrient recommendations must go hand in hand with keeping calories under control. Healthy eating habits along with weight control should become part of every adult's overall health plan. Limiting portion size, choosing foods with less refined grains, total fats (especially cholesterol, and saturated and trans fats), and avoiding foods and beverages with added sugars is important in keeping weight in check.

For more information about healthy eating, visit the USDA web site at <http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines>

Tobacco, Alcohol and Firearms

Our survey found that **19.0% of the adult population in Bristol currently smoke cigarettes.** This statistic is similar to the 2001 survey (16.9%).



BBHD has offered a smoking cessation program that uses both behavior change and medications. This eleven week program is usually offered

right after New Year when people are most ready to quit. Persons who complete this program are very successful in quitting smoking. At the end of the program 80-90% are not smoking and at 3-months, 50-60% continue to be smoke-free.

Nearly 76% of residents reported that they ban smoking in the home.

Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, or "secondhand smoke" is associated with lung cancer and heart disease in non-smoking adults and is especially harmful to children whose lungs are not fully developed.

About half of Bristol residents report having at least one alcoholic drink per month. However, among those who drink alcohol, 35% reported drinking 5 or more drinks on any one occasion. This is defined as "binge drinking". This is a significant increase from 2001 results where 12% fell into this category. It is also significantly higher than U.S. and Connecticut results (14% and 15%).

Finally, when asked about firearms in the home, 11% of Bristol residents reported having loaded or unloaded firearms in their home or vehicle.

Common Adult Health Issues

The majority of Bristol residents (86%), reported their health as excellent, very good or good. However, 1 in 4 people reported that they had one or more days in the last month when their mental health was not good. And 1 in 5 said poor physical or mental health kept them from doing normal activities.

Ninety-three percent reported having health insurance and 71% had dental coverage. Similarly, 94% had seen a physician for a routine check-up in

the last 2 years, and 81% had visited a dentist in the last year. Only 44% reported that their health care provider had talked with them about health behaviors, such as, smoking, diet, exercise and alcohol use.

Chronic Conditions among Bristol Adults

◆ Heart Attack	13%
◆ High Blood Pressure	31%
◆ Diabetes	10%

Of persons who had high blood pressure, 85% were taking medication. The rate of diabetes in Bristol residents is higher than the U.S. and Connecticut rates. One in three persons who reported having diabetes was taking insulin for their condition and 2 in 3 persons were taking oral medication. Unfortunately, only 56% reported that they had ever had a class on how to manage diabetes. These programs are available through the Bristol Hospital Program, and are an important component of learning to live with diabetes.

Emergency Preparedness

Since the events of September 11th, the significance of local emergency preparedness has underscored the need for communities to plan and prepare for a variety of disasters, both man-made and natural.

The survey asked several questions related to emergency preparedness. **It found that 76% were somewhat or well prepared to handle a large scale emergency.** Although 81% reported that they would evacuate if requested, only 1/3 reported having an evacuation plan for their household.

Despite the fact that BBHD has emergency response plans in place, **only 60% of residents were aware that BBHD has planned for major local or regional emergencies and disasters.**

The BBHD has been engaged in “all-hazards” public health emergency preparedness and response planning efforts over the past three years. Currently, BBHD is coordinating pandemic influenza planning for Bristol and Burlington. This includes plans for “mass dispensing” of antibiotics or vaccines in the event of a disease out-

break, such as pandemic flu.



If you would like to become a public health emergency volunteer, please contact Bruce Lockwood at BBHD at 584-7682.

Flu and Pneumonia Vaccine

The survey asked several questions about flu and pneumonia vaccine. Half of the respondents reported receiving the flu shot last year. **And 77% of Bristol adults aged 60 years or older reported receiving the flu vaccine last year.** Significantly more people received a flu shot in 2006 than in 2001 (50% vs. 39%). This increase may reflect the new CDC recommendations that all persons 50 years and older receive annual flu shots. Among the 50-59 year age group, 39% reported receiving influenza vaccine.

Almost half received their flu shots at the doctors office. Others received it from the health department (20%), a clinic, a hospital or at their workplace.

The main reasons cited for avoiding the flu shot included believing that they do not need it or that it causes flu. The flu vaccine is a safe vaccine recommended for anyone age 50 and over. The flu shot cannot cause the flu! High risk groups that should receive the flu vaccine each year include anyone age 65 and older and those with chronic health conditions. Children age

6 months to 5 years and all health care workers should also receive the flu vaccine every year.

Now the bad news. **Only 49% of Bristol residents over the age of 60 reported having received a vaccination for pneumococcal pneumonia.** This is significantly lower than U.S. and Connecticut results (69% and 66%).

Pneumonia vaccine is recommended for persons over age 65 and for persons with certain health conditions, including absence of a spleen.

Cancer Screening Practices

<u>Breast and Cervical Cancer</u>	
Mammogram	88%
Breast Exam	88%
Pap Test	92%

There was a significant increase in the percentage of women who reported having a mammogram in 2006 vs. 2001 (79%). This may be due in part to the Bristol Hospital Breast Cancer Program and good obstetrical and gynecological provider practice. Cervical cancer is 100% preventable when pap smears are routinely performed.

<u>Prostate Cancer</u>	
PSA Test	50%
Digital Rectal Exam	60%
Prostate Cancer	6%
*Men 40 years or older	

Prevention practices among men are somewhat lower. Only half of the men forty years of age or older ever had a Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test and only 60% reported having a digital rectal exam.

<u>Colorectal cancer</u>	
Blood Stool Test	36%
Sigmoid or Colonoscopy	54%
(of those 83% were colonoscopies)	
*Respondents 50 years or older	

A sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy test is recommended for all persons 50 years of age and older. Fifty-four percent of Bristol residents in these age groups had the procedure. And of these people, 83% reported having a colonoscopy. This rate of screening for colorectal cancer is lower than the rates for Connecticut as a whole. Screening patterns did differ between men and women.

Bristol-Burlington Health District

BBHD is located at the Bristol Senior Community Center, located at 240 Stafford Avenue. The department is made up of several divisions: Environmental Health, Public Health & School Nursing, Community Health, Public Health Emergency Preparedness, and Oral Health. To learn more, call or visit our offices or visit our web site at

<http://www.bbhd.org>

SERVICES

- Communicable disease surveillance
- Health education, screenings & referrals
- Adult & child immunization, TB skin testing
- HIV counseling/testing & referral
- Nuisance & complaint investigations
- Review of plans for septic systems, wells, building additions
- Lead inspections and monitoring of public bathing areas
- Routine inspections of food establishments, hair and nail salons
- Bristol senior dental clinic

■ **People who utilize cancer screening are more likely to be diagnosed when the cancer is still localized. When breast, prostate and colorectal cancer are diagnosed early, the 5 year survival rates are 99%, 96% and 86% respectively.**

BBHD Services & School Health

- ▶ 45% of participants with children in Bristol schools used the services of the free oral health program offered to children in kindergarten through fifth grade. Over half of those who did participate in the program had their own family dentist.
- ▶ Only 43% of persons 60 or older are aware that BBHD has a senior dental clinic on site at the Bristol Senior Center. Of those 13% have actually utilized this service. BBHD provides low-cost screening, cleaning and referral services to Bristol and Burlington residents who are 60 or older.
For further information contact the health district office at 584-7682.
- ▶ Participants were asked at what grade it is appropriate to teach students about sex, STDs and contraception in school. As in 2001, respondents felt that the most appropriate grades were 5th or 6th grade. Only 7% felt that sex education should not be taught in school.

Hours of Operation
Monday through Friday
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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Serving the communities of Bristol and Burlington since 1979.

