

Living long and healthy after 65 depends on state: CDC

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Race also influences your healthy life expectancy, researchers say.

(HealthDay)—Place and race influence healthy life expectancy at age 65, U.S. health officials said Thursday.

Blacks across the country and whites in the South have the lowest healthy life expectancy after age 65, according to 2007-2009 data analyzed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Healthy life expectancy refers to [healthy aging](#), or the number of years lived without disability.

"Our data show there is a disparity by race and region in healthy aging," said Paula Yoon, acting director of CDC's Epidemiology and Analysis Program Office and report co-author.

To try to eliminate this [disparity](#), state-by-state efforts are needed to encourage people to live healthier lifestyles and to provide access to

quality health care, she noted.

"We really need to support the [prevention programs](#) that make it easier for people to be healthy no matter who they are or where they live," Yoon said.

Healthy life expectancy is lowest in the South, compared with other areas of the United States, according to the report, published July 19 in the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Based on self-reported information, healthy life expectancy for men at 65 years ranged from a low of 10.1 years in Mississippi to a high of 15 years in Hawaii. In other words, a Mississippi man who lived to 65 would be impaired by 75, on average, compared to males in Hawaii who would stay healthy until 80. For women the range was 11.4 years in Mississippi to 17.3 years in Hawaii, the researchers found.

Women in general had a greater healthy life expectancy after age 65 than men. This gender difference ranged from 0.7 years for Louisiana residents to 3.1 years in the Dakotas.

Southerners had the lowest healthy life expectancy among whites at age 65 years, ranging from 11 years in West Virginia to nearly 19 years in Washington, D.C.

For blacks, healthy [life expectancy](#) was lower than for whites throughout the nation, except in New Mexico and Nevada. The racial gap ranged from 7.1 years in Iowa to 15.1 years in New Mexico.

Many factors contribute to healthy aging, Yoon said.

"These include safe and healthy living environments; healthy behaviors, such as exercise and not smoking; getting recommended preventative

services, such as vaccines, cancer screenings and blood pressure checks; and having access to good quality health care," she said.

More information: For more information on life expectancy, visit the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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