

Do you live in one of America's 'healthiest communities'?

March 26 2019



(HealthDay)—The healthiest community in the United States is Douglas

County in Colorado, according to the 2019 rankings just released by U.S. News & World Report.

The others in the top five healthiest communities are Los Alamos County in New Mexico; the city of Falls Church and Loudoun County, both in Virginia; and Broomfield County in Colorado, according to the magazine.

For the rankings in the second annual report, nearly 3,000 communities across the United States were evaluated on 81 [health](#)-related measures in 10 categories, including education, environment, population health and infrastructure.

Douglas County, a suburb of Denver, was among the top in at least four of the 81 measures, including physical activity, educational attainment and median household income.

Six other communities in Colorado were in the top 20: Broomfield County (ranked number 5), Chaffee County (11), Routt County (14), San Miguel County (17), Pitkin County (19) and Boulder County (20). In all seven Colorado counties, nearly all adults exercise and only about a quarter missed their annual wellness checkup.

Across all of its counties, Colorado also has the highest average score in the country in the environment category, which includes measures of natural amenities and air and water quality.

Iowa has the strongest presence in the rankings overall, with 62 counties among the top 500. Average community scores put Iowa among the top 10 states in four of the 10 broad categories, including [population health](#) and housing. The leading community in Iowa was Bremer County, which was 26th nationwide and had top scores in walkability and low toxic releases.

Of the 81 measures used for the rankings, diabetes and smoking rates have the strongest link with life expectancy. Hawaii counties had the highest life expectancy, with an average of 81.15 years.

Utah counties had the lowest average smoking rate (8.7 percent). That's about half the national average and about 3 percent lower than California, which had the second-lowest smoking rate.

Poor self-reported mental health has about the same negative link to [life expectancy](#) as diabetes, smoking and physical inactivity, and is also linked to higher rates of poverty at the community level, according to the report.

Communities in Nebraska had 16 of the top 100 spots in the [mental health](#) subcategory, including Cherry County and Morrill County, both ranked among the top 10 in that subcategory. The state has averaged 26 deaths per 100,000 population due to suicide, alcohol-related disease and drug overdoses. Only New York state had a lower rate, with 25 per 100,000 population.

Along with identifying which communities offer their citizens the greatest opportunity to live a productive, healthy life, the report can help residents, health care leaders and elected officials develop policies and best practices that help improve health.

"Through the Healthiest Communities initiative, U.S. News expands on three decades of expertise in measuring health care quality to assess how social determinants affect community health," Eric Gertler, executive chairman of U.S. News & World Report, said in a magazine news release.

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine offers resources on [healthy living](#).

Copyright © 2019 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Do you live in one of America's 'healthiest communities'? (2019, March 26) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-03-america-healthiest.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.