



Gaston County's Health Report Card

December 2012



Public health officials call a document like this a “report card” because it provides a snapshot of Gaston County’s health . The grades are based on Gaston County’s health measures in relation to the state, the nation, and our numbers in previous years. These numbers are essential to helping Gaston County become a healthy community.

When analyzing these numbers, some areas stand out as needing special attention. These are the basis for our **public health priorities**, as determined by the Gaston County Board of Health:

Reducing Obesity and Increasing Physical Activity & Good Nutrition

Three out of four adults in Gaston County are overweight or obese. Heart disease is the **number one killer** in the county. Most Gaston County residents don’t get enough physical activity or fruits and vegetables each day.



Reducing Tobacco Use and Substance Abuse

More than one-quarter of Gaston residents smoke, and lung disease is one of the top killers in the county. Gaston’s number of heavy drinkers is on the rise.



Reducing Teen Pregnancy

One in five girls in Gaston County will get pregnant before her 20th birthday. Girls who are minorities are **more likely** to get pregnant.

How Healthy is Gaston County?

About This Document

The data below attempts to accurately reflect the overall health of Gaston County. Grades were assigned by considering Gaston County's status in comparison to the state, the previous year, and five-year trend. The direction of the trend (down or up) may be bad or good, depending on the nature of the particular measure. For this reason, positive and negative trends are color-coded for ease of reading.

Key

- Positive Trend
- Negative Trend
- No Discernable Trend
- Board of Health Priority Indicator

Chronic Disease	Previous Year <small>(2010 unless otherwise noted)</small>		Most Recent Year <small>(2011 unless otherwise noted)</small>		Grade	5-year trend <small>(Gaston)</small>
	Gaston	NC	Gaston	NC		
Cancer Rate ¹	494.5 ^{'08}	488.2 ^{'08}	502.7 ^{'09}	496.8 ^{'09}	C	
Heart Disease Deaths ¹	234.9	179.2	225.6	175.6	C	
Diabetes	11.0%	9.8%	18.2%	10.9%	C-	
Lung Disease Deaths ¹	164.5	122.6	203.3	122.5	D	
Overweight/Obese	58.0%	65.3%	74.7%	65.1%	C	
Disability	40.8%	32.9%	35.4%	25.0%	D+	

¹ per 100,000 people

Child Health	Previous Year <small>(2010 unless otherwise noted)</small>		Most Recent Year <small>(2011 unless otherwise noted)</small>		Grade	5-year trend <small>(Gaston)</small>
	Gaston	NC	Gaston	NC		
Infant Deaths ¹	8.1	7.0	5.1	7.2	B	
Child Deaths ²	63.0	57.4	38.8	57.3	B	
Uninsured Children	8.6% ^{'09}	8.7% ^{'09}	10.3% ^{'10}	11.3% ^{'10}	B+	
Free/Reduced Lunch	58.9% ^{'10-'11}	53.9% ^{'10-'11}	59.9% ^{'11-'12}	56.0% ^{'11-'12}	D+	
Children Eligible for Medicaid	47.8% ^{'09}	42.7% ^{'09}	42.0% ^{'10}	34.6% ^{'10}	D-	

¹ per 1,000 live births
² per 100,000 children 0-17 years

Lifestyle Behaviors	Previous Year <small>(2009)</small>		Most Recent Year <small>(2011)</small>		Grade	5-year trend <small>(Gaston)</small>
	Gaston	NC	Gaston	NC		
Recommended amount of physical activity	45.2%	46.4%	45.0%	46.8%	C	
Consumption of healthy foods	18.5%	20.6%	8.6%	13.7%	F	



Environmental	Previous Year <small>(2010)</small>		Most Recent Year <small>(2011)</small>		Grade	5-year trend <small>(Gaston)</small>
	Gaston	Mecklenburg	Gaston	Mecklenburg		
Unhealthy air quality days for sensitive groups	0	14	0	17	A+	

About the Data

- Data for this document was compiled from the following sources:
- The North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics www.schs.state.nc.us
 - The U.S. Census Bureau www.census.gov
 - The N.C. Comprehensive Assessment for Tracking Community Health www.ncpublichealthcatch.com
 - MATCH County Health Rankings Report www.countyhealthrankings.org
 - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency www.epa.gov
 - North Carolina Public Health www.ncpublichealth.com
 - Public Schools of North Carolina www.ncpublicschools.org
 - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics www.bls.gov

Women's Health	Previous Year <small>(2010 unless otherwise noted)</small>		Most Recent Year <small>(2011 unless otherwise noted)</small>		Grade	5-year trend <small>(Gaston)</small>
	Gaston	NC	Gaston	NC		
Teen Birth Rate ¹	48.5	38.3	48.8	43.8	C	
New mothers who are breastfeeding	15.3%	22.8%	21.5%	23.2%	A-	
Medicaid Births	60.3% ^{'08}	52.6% ^{'08}	66.2% ^{'09}	57.3% ^{'09}	D-	
Pap smears	84.2% ^{'08}	86.9% ^{'08}	72.7% ^{'10}	84.0% ^{'10}	D-	
Mammograms	77.4%	78.5%	76.3% ^{'10}	77.1% ^{'10}	C-	
Low Birth Weight	9.7%	9.1%	9.2%	9.1%	C+	
Adequate prenatal care	87.8%	95.7%	91.4%	89.8%	C-	



Behavioral Health	Previous Year <small>(2010 unless otherwise noted)</small>		Most Recent Year <small>(2011 unless otherwise noted)</small>		Grade	5-year trend <small>(Gaston)</small>
	Gaston	NC	Gaston	NC		
Poor mental health	24.6%	23.2%	24.2%	24.9%	C	
Smoking	27.6%	19.8%	25.2%	21.8%	C-	
Suicide rate ¹	15.0	12.2	13.0	12.4	C	
Heavy drinking	3.6%	3.5%	5.4%	5.6%	B-	



Socioeconomic	Previous Year <small>(2010 unless otherwise noted)</small>		Most Recent Year <small>(2011 unless otherwise noted)</small>		Grade	5-year trend <small>(Gaston)</small>
	Gaston	NC	Gaston	NC		
Median Household Income	\$39,054	\$43,326	\$40,674	\$43,916	C	
Finished high school	79.9%	84.7%	83.0%	84.7%	B-	
Finished bachelor's degree	16.9%	26.5%	18.5%	26.9%	D+	
School dropout rate	3.0% ^{'09-'10}	2.6% ^{'09-'10}	3.1% ^{'10-'11}	2.3% ^{'10-'11}	C	
Unemployment rate	12.2%	10.6%	11.3%	10.4%	C-	
Percent of children in single-parent households	36.6%	36.6%	39.4%	37.1%	C-	
Uninsured	19.2%	16.8%	18.3%	16.3%	B+	
Families living in poverty	16.9%	13.3%	13.3%	13.2%	C+	

Communicable Disease	Previous Year <small>(2010)</small>		Most Recent Year <small>(2011)</small>		Grade	5-year trend <small>(Gaston)</small>
	Gaston	NC	Gaston	NC		
Pneumonia/Influenza Deaths ¹	25.7	17.7	29.9	16.7	D-	
HIV Rate ²	14.8	15.9	15.5	16.4	B-	
Chlamydia ²	427.0	449.5	696.3	564.8	C+	
Gonorrhea ²	162.1	150.9	173.2	179.9	B+	
Syphilis ³	2.4	7.7	3.9	8.1	A-	

¹ deaths per 100,000 residents
² new cases per 100,000 residents
³ new "early syphilis" cases per 100,000 residents

How are we building a healthier Gaston County?

To learn more about our efforts in these areas or any of our individual programs, please call 704-853-5118.

Obesity Reduction Activities

Gaston County needs a change — more healthy food options and a community that is more conducive to walking and active lifestyles. The Health Department is creating an ambitious obesity prevention initiative designed to build a healthier Gaston County from the inside out, using community collaboration to bring about policies and built environmental changes that will support and sustain a healthier, more active community.



Tobacco Reduction Activities



Prior to North Carolina's smoke-free restaurants and bars law taking effect in January 2010, the Health Department led the effort to get restaurants to voluntarily go smoke-free. Because one in five Gaston County women smoke during pregnancy, the Health Department also works with pregnant women to help them quit for good.

Teen Pregnancy Reduction Activities

The Health Department has made teen pregnancy a major focus in recent years. In addition to our new Teen Wellness Center, made possible with a grant from the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Campaign of North Carolina, the Health Department conducts half a dozen teen pregnancy prevention programs in the community. These programs range from training parents how to discuss their values about sex with their preteens to working with kids in after-school programs, encouraging them to set goals and keep their focus on the future.

