

# north shore news

## North Shore folks healthier, wealthier than most

[Jane Seyd](#) / North Shore News

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file photo Cindy Goodman, North Shore News

North Shore residents enjoy some of the best health in the Lower Mainland, with 73 per cent of residents in upper West Vancouver rating their health good or excellent – twice the rate of the region's residents generally.

North Shore residents “do better in almost everything,” said Dr. Mark Lysyshyn, medical health officer for the North Shore. “Almost every indicator you look at (North Shore residents) are at the top.”

That's not terribly surprising, added Lysyshyn.

North Shore residents are also comparatively wealthy and well-educated and have access to good food, a pleasant place to live and good social supports – factors that tend to favour good health worldwide.

“It's what we would call the social determinants of health,” said Lysyshyn.

Among those factors, more people on the North Shore are employed than they are region wide (except in West Vancouver, where many people are retirement age) and more people (80 per cent in West Vancouver) tend to own their own homes. Between 58 and 71 per cent of North Shore residents who responded to a Vancouver Coastal Health survey in 2013 rated their mental health excellent – above the regional average of 56 per cent.

But there are also some significant differences between communities on the North Shore, said Lysyshyn.

Residents in the more urban City of North Vancouver, for instance, tend to be less well off economically than their neighbours in the districts of North Vancouver and West Vancouver. While 61 per cent of those in upper West Vancouver reported a household income of more than \$100,000 a year, on the west side of the City of North Vancouver, 36 per cent of respondents said their household income was less than \$40,000 annually.

The disparity translates into city residents being less healthy than their suburban counterparts in some areas measured by the survey, as shown on a recently released detailed interactive map of survey results.

For instance, city residents were far less likely to get more than 150 minutes of exercise a week than their counterparts in upper West Vancouver and more likely to report indulging in sugary drinks. In contrast to the rest of the North Shore, smoking rates in parts of North Vancouver City were also higher than the region's average of 10 per cent.

Despite the North Shore's generally good health, Lysyshyn said one area where locals get a failing grade is their car-dependent lifestyles. With the exception of residents in the city, more North Shore residents (up to 81 per cent in some areas) commute regularly by car and fewer take public transportation than residents in the rest of Metro Vancouver.

Getting out of cars more often sets patterns in childhood for behaviour later in life. Taking public transit and walking more also promote social connectivity, he added.

The interactive map of the health survey results is meant to be a resource, both for decision makers and the general public, partly because "there wasn't a lot of health data collected at the federal level for 10 years previously," Lysyshyn said.

To see the interactive map, go to [fraserhealth.ca/MHMCAtlas/index.html](http://fraserhealth.ca/MHMCAtlas/index.html) (<http://fraserhealth.ca/MHMCAtlas/index.html>).

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