

HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE

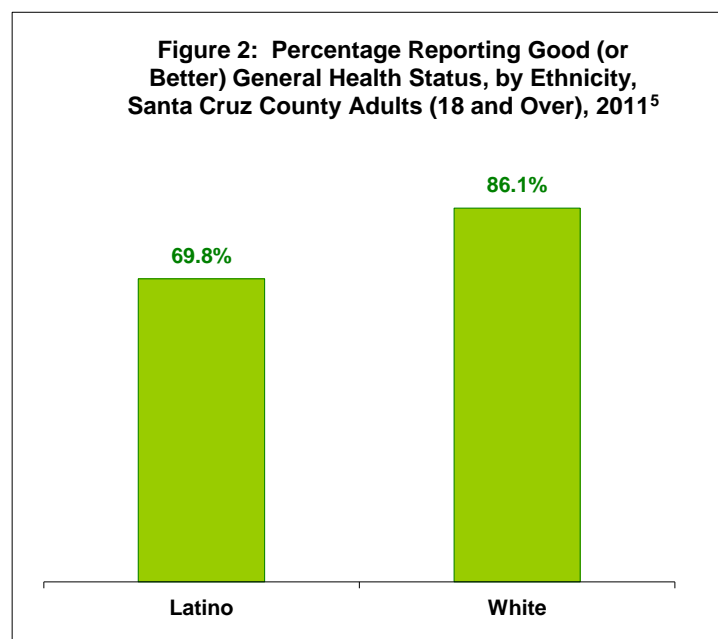
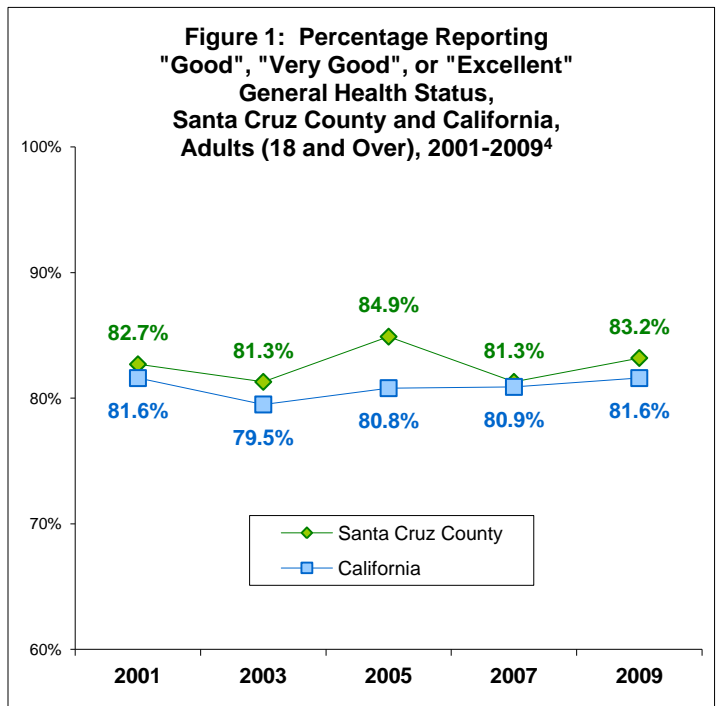
Importance	"Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being -- not merely just the absence of disease or infirmity," as defined by the World Health Organization in 1948. ¹ Traditionally, health data has been presented in the negative, and what is measured is ill health and its severe manifestations. Measuring health-related quality of life is intended to more adequately assess health beyond morbidity and mortality. The national <i>Healthy People 2020</i> organization has identified quality of life improvement as one of the central public health goals for the nation. ²
Definitions	Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQOL): an individual's or group's perceived physical and mental health over time, as defined by the CDC ¹

Quality of life is a broad and subjective concept, and it means something different for nearly every person. Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQOL) includes measures that clearly affect quality of life, such as physical and mental health. The CDC spent several years developing and validating a compact set of measures to assess HRQOL, known as the "Healthy Days Measures." They assess a person's perceived sense of well-being based on four questions: 1) self-rated health, 2) number of recent days when physical health was not good, 3) number of recent days when mental health was not good, and 4) number of recent activity limitation days because of poor physical or mental health; "recent" is defined as within 30 days.

Since 1993, the national Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey has included these questions. BRFSS asks people, "In general, would you say that your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?" Between 2004 and 2010, 83% of adults in Santa Cruz County said their health was good, very good, or excellent, compared to 81% of adults statewide.³

This question is also asked regularly through the statewide California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), and again, Santa Cruz County consistently fares a little higher than California (see Figure 1).

Santa Cruz County also has a countywide survey called the Community Assessment Project (CAP), and in 2011 this question was added to the survey. CAP similarly found that 83% of adults reported good (or better) general health. However, Latinos were significantly less likely than Whites to report good (or better) general health (69.8% versus 86.1%) (see Figure 2).



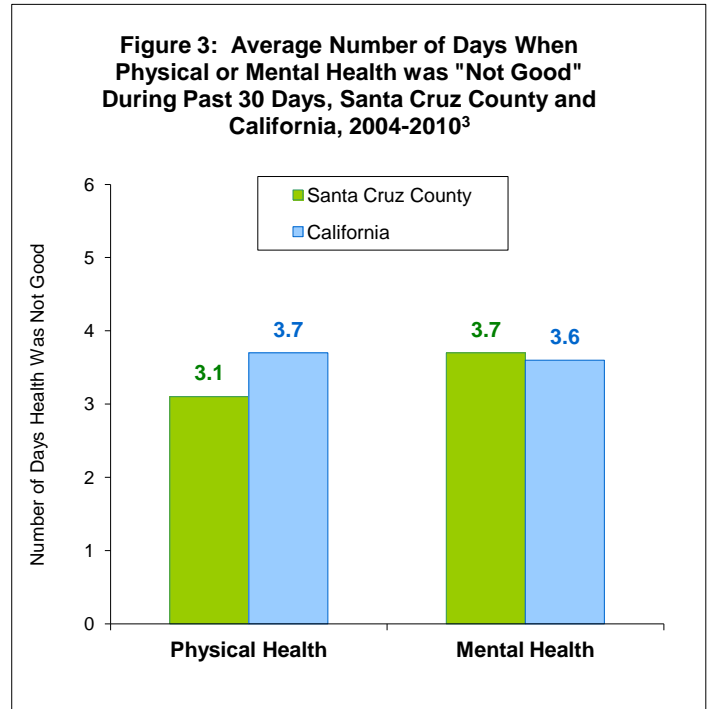
HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE

PHYSICAL HEALTH

BRFSS asks respondents how many of the past 30 days their physical health was not good. Santa Cruz County residents reported 3.1 days, compared to 3.7 days statewide, between 2004 and 2011 (see Figure 3). Santa Cruz County ranked in the top quartile statewide. The national benchmark (90th percentile county) is 2.6 days.³

MENTAL HEALTH

BRFSS also asks, "Thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?" Santa Cruz County residents reported 3.7 days, compared to 3.6 days statewide, between 2004 and 2011 (see Figure 3). The national benchmark (90th percentile county) is 2.3 days.³



Helpful Websites	Healthy People	http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/about/qolwbabout.aspx
	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:	http://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/
Sources	<p>(1) CDC. "Measuring Healthy Days. Population Assessment of Health-Related Quality of Life." November 2000. http://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/pdfs/mhd.pdf.</p> <p>(2) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. <i>Health-Related Quality of Life and Well-Being</i>. http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/about/qolwbabout.aspx.</p> <p>(3) University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. <i>County Health Rankings</i>. http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-factors/education.</p> <p>(4) California Health Interview Survey. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. http://www.chis.ucla.edu/.</p> <p>(5) Applied Survey Research. <i>Community Assessment Project Report: Year 18 (2012)</i>. http://www.appliedsurveyresearch.org/storage/database/quality-of-life/santacruzcap/cap18_2012/CAP_Year18_CompleteReport.pdf.</p>	