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## Health profile: More county residents smoking; residents eat more fast food than in other counties

More Riverside County residents – adults and young people – smoke than in previous years, and residents eat fast food more often than the rest of California. Those factors might help explain why Riverside County ranks near the bottom in overall health among California counties and why more than 60 percent of early deaths here are caused by heart disease, cancer, lung disease and stroke.

These nuggets and more detailed information can be found in the 2013 Community Health Profile, an 83-page snapshot of the health of county residents.

The report, released by the County of Riverside Department of Public Health, describes the health issues facing Riverside County residents. It illustrates the scope of the chronic disease problem, the behaviors that lead to disease, and suggests opportunities to change behaviors to improve health. Recent studies ranked Riverside County 32<sup>nd</sup> among California's 58 counties in overall health.

"We're using data to tell a story; create a roadmap," said Wendy Hetherington, chief epidemiologist for the county. "The report will help guide our public health programs and policies."

The report is also the foundation for the Healthy Riverside County Initiative, an effort being launched in conjunction with the release of the health profile. Using the findings of the report the initiative has four priority areas: Improving eating habits, increase daily physical activity, reduce tobacco rates and building healthier environments that support walking, biking and exercise.

"It's a new era of community involvement and population health improvement. The profile serves as starting point for community driven change. By making better food and drink choices, building exercise into our day and not smoking, we can make a difference not only for ourselves but for our friends and family," said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, Riverside County interim health officer.

The report, which includes data collected from local, state and federal sources, provides a resource for educational institutions, cities and other municipalities looking for ways to improve the health of their employees and residents.



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The 2013 Community Health Profile is available for download at: [www.rivcoph.org](http://www.rivcoph.org) and [www.rivcohealthdata.org](http://www.rivcohealthdata.org)