



Education & Occupation

Goal

Well educated citizens with opportunities to earn a living wage

Education and occupation combine with income to provide a thorough measure of socioeconomic status – and a person’s socioeconomic status is one of the strongest predictors of his or her health.

Research suggests that people who complete higher levels of schooling have greater cognitive and social survival skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork, structure, routine, and dependability.¹ And gainful employment can have a beneficial effect on health, both directly and indirectly—as a way to access benefits that promote health, earn the income to pay for basic necessities and often, to give a sense of purpose and wellbeing.

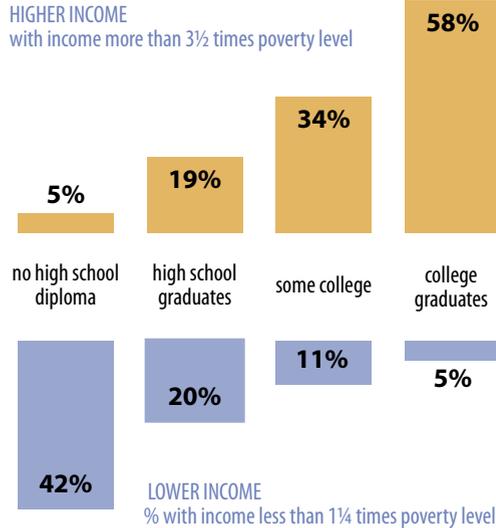
Although income, education and occupation each play a unique role in a person’s overall health, all three measures are closely linked:

> While 42% of Vermonters who have less than a high school education earn an income below the federal poverty level, only 5% of those who have a college degree earn so little.

> 5% of Vermonters who had less than a high school diploma were unemployed, as compared to 2% of those who had a college degree or more.

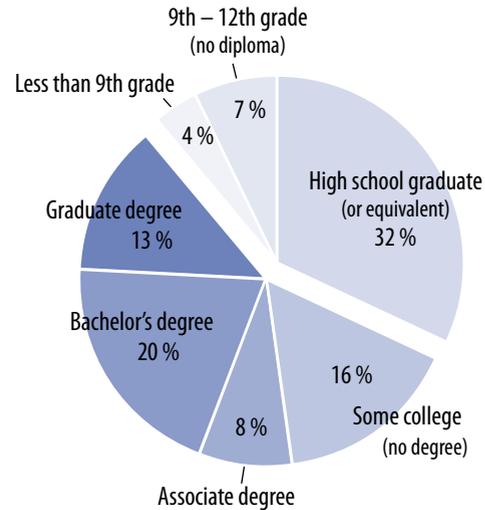
Income & Education

Vermonters age 25+ • 2008



Educational Attainment

Among Vermonters age 25+ • 2005-2007



How educated are Vermonters?

Vermonters are slightly more educated than people in the rest of the country:

> Nearly 90% of Vermont adults have a high school education or more, compared to 84% for the U.S.²

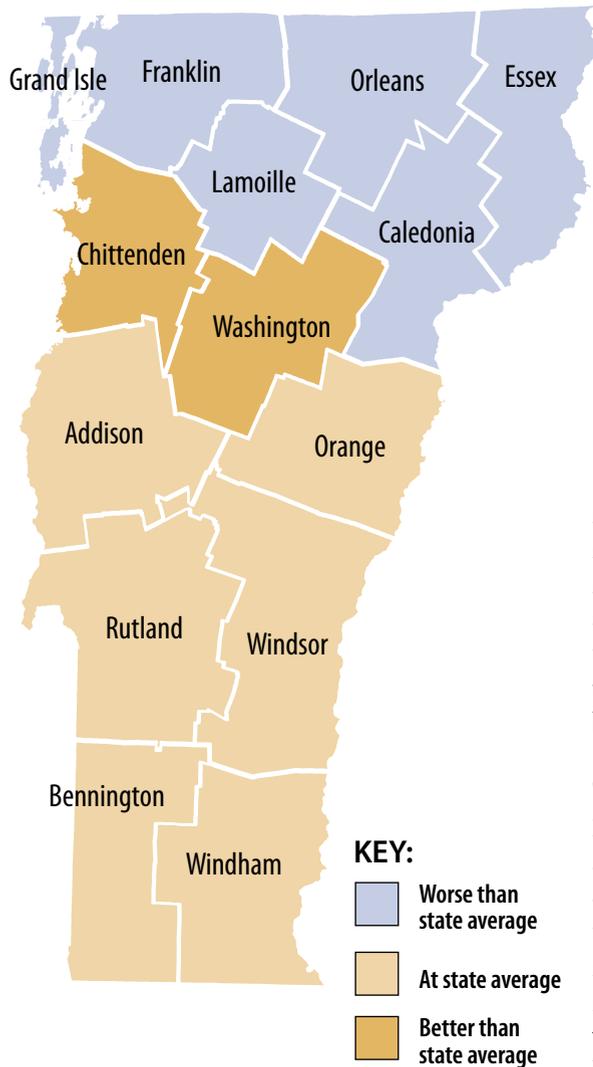
> 33% hold a bachelor's degree or more, compared to 27% for the U.S.²

> Educational attainment varies across the state. Chittenden and Washington counties have higher levels of educational attainment, while Vermont's northern counties have lower levels.



Educational Status

% of Vermonters age 25+ who have less than a high school diploma, by county • 2003-2008



Employment trends

The Vermont Department of Labor reported the state's overall unemployment rate at 6.4 percent in November 2009. This is a trend up from 4.6 percent unemployed at the same time one year before. The U.S. unemployment rate is generally higher than in Vermont, at 10 percent in November 2009 and 6.8 percent the year before.

These percentages translate to about 23,100 Vermonters who are out of work, although Vermont's Agency of Agriculture estimates there are approximately 2,000 undocumented farm workers who are not reflected in these data. These workers are mostly Mexican and Spanish-speaking, who work for hourly wages and have no health insurance.

Who is working and who is not?

There is some variation in unemployment rates throughout Vermont:

> Orleans, Essex and Grand Isle counties had the highest rates of unemployment in 2008, compared to Chittenden and Windsor counties, which had the lowest.

From 2003 to 2008:

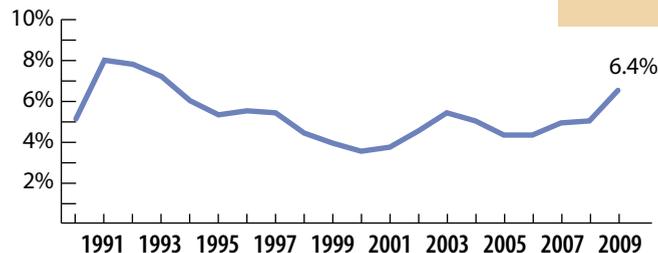
> The unemployment rate for people age 18 to 24 was 8%, compared to 4% for 35- to 64-year-olds.

> The unemployment rate for racial or ethnic minorities was 6%, compared to 4% for white, non-Hispanic people.

> The unemployment rate for adults who have never married was 8%. For those who are divorced or separated, the unemployment rate was 6%. Only 3% of those who were married were unemployed.

Unemployment Trends

Vermont Department of Labor figures



Working in Vermont

Based on a 2005-07 community survey, Vermonters age 16+ work in the following industries:

	#	%
Educational services, health care, social assistance.....	84,967	26%
Manufacturing	38,654	12%
Retail trade.....	38,523	12%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	30,055	9%
Construction	27,390	8%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative services	26,966	8%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental & leasing.....	16,091	5%
Public administration	15,746	5%
Other services except public administration	15,041	5%
Transportation & warehousing, utilities	11,793	4%
Wholesale trade.....	9,347	3%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, mining	7,989	2%
Information.....	7,170	2%



Higher education = better health

Vermonters with less than a high school education are more likely to have diabetes, heart disease, asthma, obesity or depression, compared to those who have a college degree.

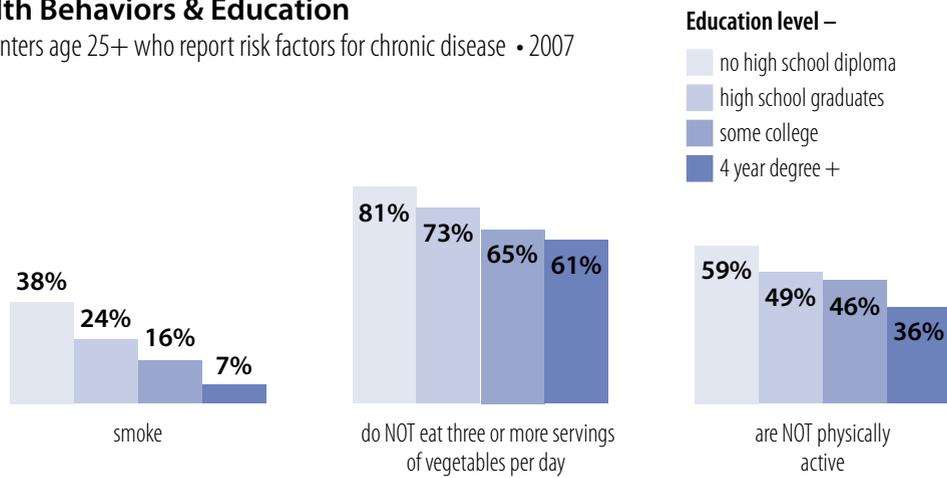
> Two-thirds of people with less than a high school education report having one or more chronic conditions, compared to one-third of those who have a college degree or more.

> A person's perception of his or her own health is more positive among those who are more educated.

The well-known risk factors for chronic health conditions—smoking, inactivity—poor nutrition—are less common among those with more education.

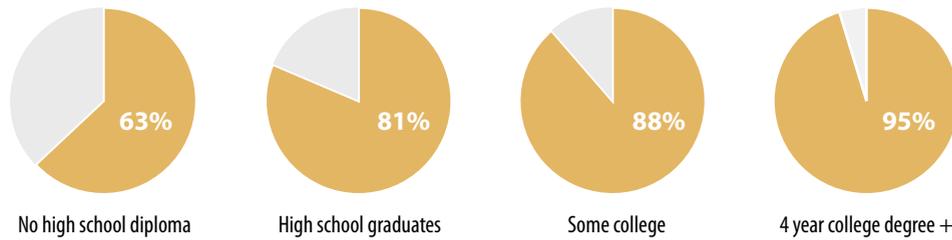
Health Behaviors & Education

Vermonters age 25+ who report risk factors for chronic disease • 2007



Personal Health & Education

Vermonters age 25+ who report they are in good or excellent health, by educational level • 2008

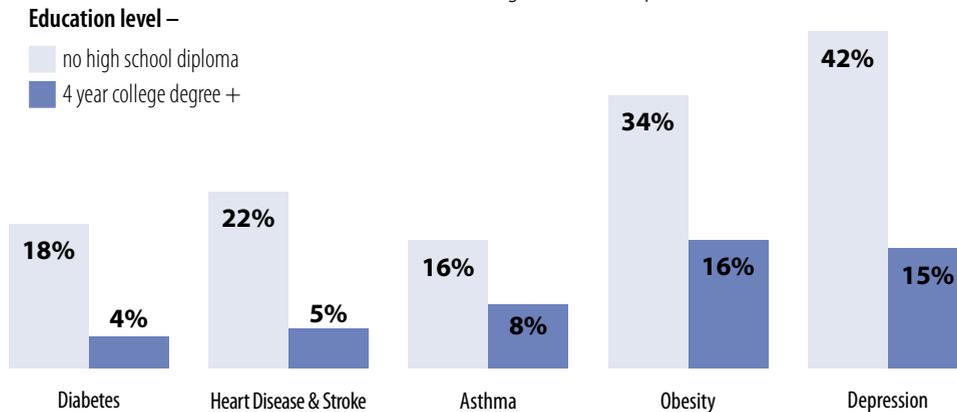


In Vermont, alcohol and drug use do not appear to vary according to educational attainment. However, studies have shown that even when these risk factors are present, people with a higher socioeconomic

status are less likely to suffer from chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease and stroke. This is possibly because they do not have to struggle to meet the basic needs of daily life.

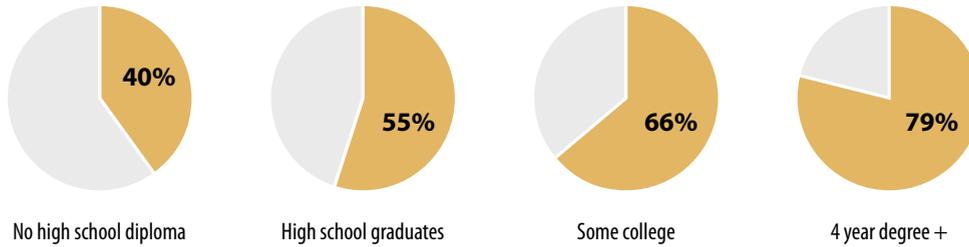
Chronic Conditions & Education

Vermonters age 25+ who report risk factors for chronic disease • 2007



Education & Pregnancy

Pregnant women in Vermont who report their pregnancies were planned, by educational level • 2008



Parents' education matters

Many studies show correlations between educational attainment of the mother and birth outcomes—starting with planning for parenthood.

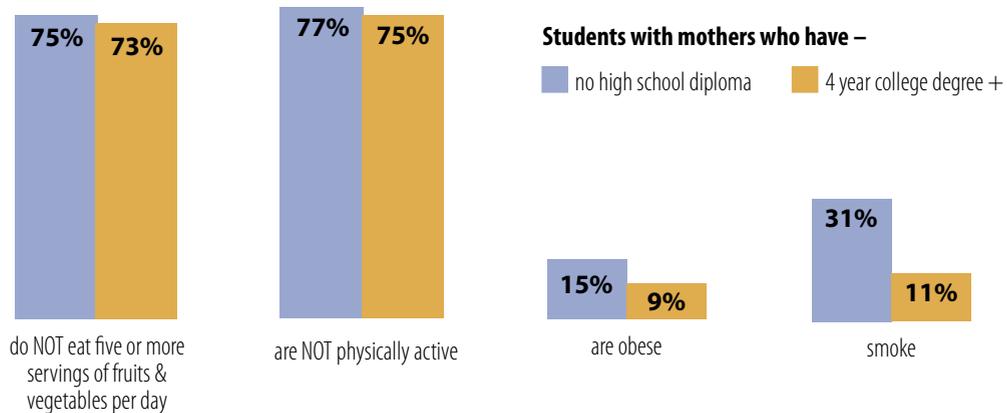
Smoking and drinking during pregnancy is more commonplace among less educated women. And both of these behaviors are linked to poor birth outcomes.

> 79% of women who hold a college degree report that their pregnancy was intended, compared to 40% of women without a high school diploma.

> Infant mortality is almost twice as high among babies born to women with less than a high school education, compared to women with a four-year college degree.

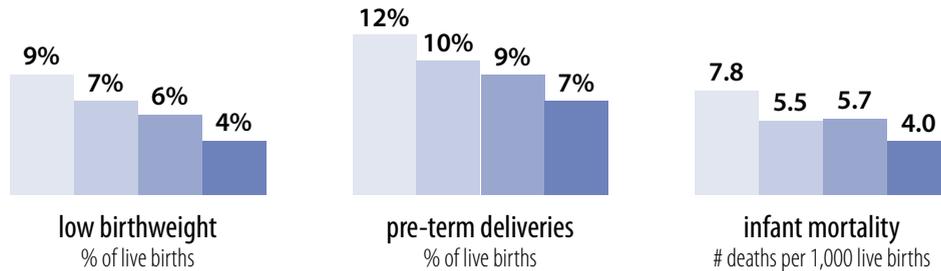
Student's Health Risk Behaviors & Mother's Education Level

Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 8th-12th graders • 2009



Mother's educational level –

no high school diploma some college
high school graduates 4 year degree +



Education & Childbirth

Vermont birth records • 2007

> Less educated women are more likely to have a pre-term delivery, and to have a low birthweight babies.

Maternal education appears to play a role in childhood obesity, as well as depression and suicide attempts.

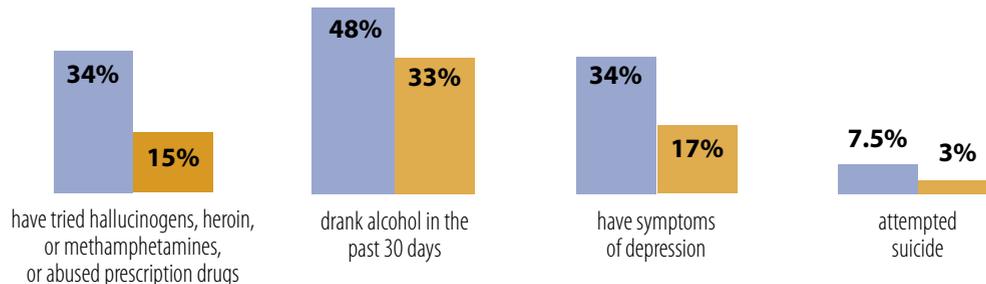
Children with more educated mothers are more likely to achieve higher grades in school, and more likely to engage in healthy behaviors such as not smoking, drinking or using drugs.

> 55% of all high school students who had a mother with less than a high school diploma reported getting As and Bs, compared to 85% of high school students who had mothers with a four year college degree or more.

Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 8th-12th graders • 2009

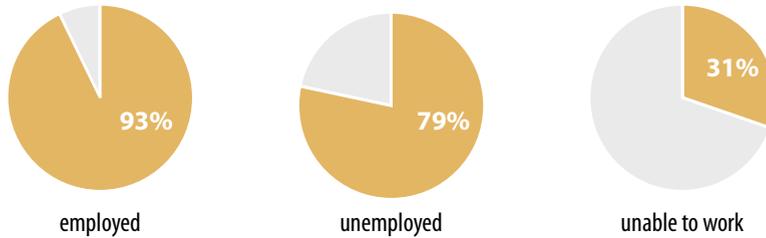
Students with mothers who have –

no high school diploma 4 year college degree +



Personal Health & Employment Status

Vermont adults who report they are in good or excellent health, by employment status • 2008



Employment = better health

Unemployment affects a person's health, and this is documented by a variety of data.

> The largest group of people who report having high blood pressure, depression and who smoke are unemployed or unable to work.

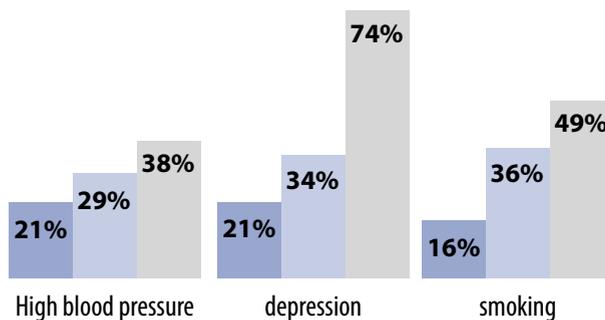
> The percentage of Vermonters who do not have health insurance is over double among the unemployed, compared to those who have a job.

Unemployment can also affect community life and social wellbeing. As joblessness is more prevalent, social networks and collective engagement in solving neighborhood and community problems tends to grow weaker.

Employment & Well-being

% of high blood pressure (2005-07), depression (2008), and smoking (2008) among Vermont adults who are –

■ employed ■ unemployed ■ unable to work

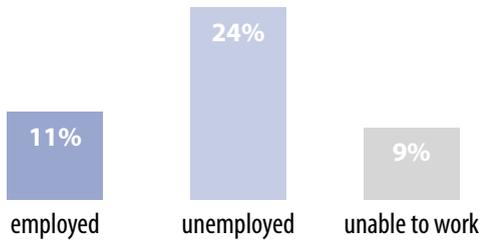


On-the-job safety, or not?

Some occupations are riskier than others. Manual labor, for example, is associated with a greater chance for certain chronic conditions and injury, exposure to toxic substances, or death. In a 2006 survey of farmer's health conducted by the Vermont Department of Health, 87% of owner-operator farmers reported that they had symptoms of arthritis, pain and stiffness of joints, with most having had such symptoms for more than a year.

Health Insurance & Employment

% of Vermonters without health insurance • 2008



Vermont hospital discharge data detail the range of injuries with claims related to work. In 2006:

- > 8,420 visits to the emergency room were attributed to worker's compensation claims.
- > 274 Vermonters were hospitalized for work injuries.
- > From 2003 to 2007, a total of 12 deaths were attributed to worker's compensation claims. ▼

References

- ¹ Heras-Muney A. *The Relationship between Education and Adult Mortality in the U.S. Review of Economic Studies*. 2005; 72:189-221.
- ² U.S. Census Bureau. *Selected Economic Characteristics*. 2005-2007.

Vermont Emergency Dept. Visits

visits related to Workers' Comp claims per year

2002	9,600
2003	8,290
2004	8,274
2005	8,597
2006	8,420

Worker's Comp Claims

Most frequent claims resulting in emergency room visit • Vermont 2006

Cutting & piercing injuries	1,445
Overexertion & strenuous movements	1,345
Falls	1,177
Struck by objects or persons.....	764
Caught in or between objects	409
Machinery-related	242
Foreign body entering eye and adnexa	243
Struck by falling object	272
Hot substance or object, caustic or corrosive material & steam.....	238
Motor vehicle traffic.....	150