

What Is Public Health?

Public health is the practice of protecting and improving the health of people and populations. You can practice public health through research, health promotion, disease prevention, and community outreach, as well as through policy and advocacy efforts. Public health professionals can focus on large global populations or work directly with local communities.

Public health is

- chronic and infectious disease prevention
- disaster preparedness and mitigation
- disparities in health care, access, and outcomes
- environmental health and risk analysis
- global health and health equity
- health policy and advocacy
- health systems and health reform
- social and behavioral factors in health promotion and wellness

Why Public Health?

Growth in public health careers is driven by efforts to improve health outcomes and reduce health care costs by teaching strategies to people and communities that will help them optimize health and wellness. Employment of health educators and community health workers is projected to grow 13 percent from 2014 to 2024, which is **faster than the average for all occupations**. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016–17 Edition*.)

Public health is advantageous for anyone interested in health and wellness. The curriculum is flexible to meet the academic requirements of students wishing to pursue graduate training in the health professions (e.g., medicine, nursing, and dental), as well as for students pursuing nonclinical professions.

What Career Options Are Available for Public Health Graduates?

- disaster and emergency specialist
- environmental scientist
- epidemiologist
- government employee
- health care administrator
- health educator
- health inspector
- health policy researcher or legislator
- nonprofit coordinator or executive director
- physician or other health professional
- policy advocate and lobbyist
- program developer, manager, and evaluator
- researcher or statistician