

Week 1: Introduction to principles of public health



Welcome to Week 1. In this week we will cover definitions of health and public health, introduce the determinants of health, and explore the links between health and broader social and cultural factors. In addition, a brief history of public health is outlined along with what is termed the 'new' public health, and important public health declarations, charters and calls to action are highlighted.

Outcomes

By the end of this week, having completed the readings and all activities, you will be able to:

Topic 1: What does health mean?

- Explain health from a public health perspective.

Topic 2: What is public health?

- Evaluate the development of public health and identify the key historical and contemporary public health successes.

Topic 3: A Global Charter for the Public's Health

- Identify and differentiate the diversity of public health employment opportunities in relation to public health core services and enabling function.



Estimated learning hours

You will need to spend around 19–20 hours in total studying and completing activities this week.



Weekly tutorial

The tutorials give you the opportunity to interact with subject matter experts in real time. These sessions are offered throughout the study period and are considered to be an essential part of the learning activities.

We recommend that you attend the tutorial you are allocated too; however, if you are unable to do so, it is essential that you view and/or listen to the recording. Recordings and session notes are typically available after the final zoom session for the topic has taken place.

Below are links to the various topics in this week of learning. Click on Topic 1 to get started with the learning for this week. If you have already started this week of learning, you can resume your studies at any of the below.

Arrows at the bottom of the topic pages will take you to the next page within a topic, or the next topic. Otherwise you can return to this weekly landing page or the home page of this subject by using the tiles on the navigation bar on the left of this site.

Good luck with your studies this week!



[Topic 1: What does health mean?](#)



[Topic 2: What is public health?](#)



[Topic 3: A Global Charter for the Public's Health](#)



[Summary and checklist](#)

Your progress





[Materials students Week 1](#)



Week 1 Glossary

Determinant

Any factor, whether event, characteristic, or other definable entity, that brings about change in a health condition or other defined characteristic.

Determinants of health

The range of personal, social, economic and environmental factors which determine the health status of individuals or populations. The factors which influence health are multiple and interactive. Health promotion is fundamentally concerned with action and advocacy to address the full range of potentially modifiable determinants of health – not only those which are related to the actions of individuals, such as health behaviours and lifestyles, but also factors such as income and social status, education, employment and working conditions, access to appropriate health services, and the physical environments. These, in combination, create different living conditions which impact on health. Achieving change in these lifestyles and living conditions, which determine health status, are considered to be intermediate health outcomes.

Downstream

Interventions, which often involve individual-level behavioural approaches for prevention or disease management.

Health

At a simple level, one can view the concept of health by focusing on the individual and on the presence, or absence, of disease and medically measured risk factors.

A broader and more widely accepted view sees health as multidimensional: defining health 'as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO 1946).

This multidimensional model incorporates:

- genetic, lifestyle and environmental factors
- cultural influences
- socioeconomic conditions
- provision of, access to, and use of health care services and programs.

Midstream

Interventions occur within organisations. For example, worksite-based programs that increase employee access to facilities for physical activity show promise in improving health.

Upstream

Interventions involve policy approaches that can affect large populations through regulation, increased access, or economic incentives. For example, increasing tobacco taxes is an effective method for controlling tobacco-related diseases (US Department of Health and Human Services 2000).



