



# People with disability in Australia 2026

## Summary fact sheet 2: Health of people with disability

### About this fact sheet

This fact sheet is part of a series summarising key findings from the *People with disability in Australia 2026* report. Each fact sheet presents information about experiences and outcomes for people with disability in a selected life area.

In these fact sheets and the *People with disability in Australia* report, disability is an umbrella term that includes impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions (for more information, refer to '[Defining disability](#)'). Increasingly, disability is recognised as something that affects most people, directly or indirectly, to varying degrees and at different life stages.

People with disability are more likely than those without disability to have poor **general and mental health**, and higher levels of **bodily pain**.

In 2022:



- **32%** of adults (aged 18 and over) with disability said their **health was excellent or very good**, compared with 69% of those without disability



- **27%** of adults with disability experienced **high or very high psychological distress** in the last 4 weeks, compared with 6.7% of those without disability



- **17%** of adults with disability experienced **severe or very severe bodily pain** within the last 4 weeks, compared with 2.1% of those without disability.

People with disability have higher **health risk factors** than those without disability. In 2022:

- 14% of adults (aged 18 and over) with disability smoked daily, compared with 8.7% of those without disability.
- 39% of adults with disability had a BMI in the obese range, compared with 28% of those without disability.

Health risk factors are higher for some groups of people with disability than others.

For example, in 2022:

- 37% of men (aged 18 and over) with disability exceeded alcohol consumption guidelines, compared with 18% of women with disability. This pattern is similar to the general Australian population.
- 41% of people with disability aged 65 and over had uncontrolled high blood pressure, compared with 22% of those aged 18–64.

Some people with disability experience **barriers to accessing and using health services**. These include long waiting times, high cost of services, the accessibility of buildings, and a need for coordination of care among health professionals. In 2022:

- 46% of people with disability who did not see a dental professional when needed said cost was the main reason
- 43% of people with disability who did not see a GP when needed said waiting time or service availability was the main reason
- nearly half (47%) of people with severe or profound disability saw 3 or more health professionals for the same condition, as did one-third (35%) of people with disability other than severe or profound
- more than 1 in 10 (11%) people with disability aged 5 and over who had challenges with communication or mobility had difficulty accessing medical facilities.

**Attitudes of health workers** are an important factor in service use experience. In 2024, 15% of adults (aged 18+) with disability who had used health services in the past 12 months felt they would have been treated better by health workers if they did not have disability.

### Where can I find out more?

More information about health outcomes, interaction of selected chronic conditions and disability, health behaviours, and access to health services by people with disability can be found in the ['Health'](#) chapter of the *People with disability in Australia 2026* report.

### Where did these data come from?

Findings in this section are based on data from 3 surveys:

- the ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2022
- the ABS National Health Survey (NHS) 2022
- Australia's Disability Strategy Survey 2024.

For more information about specific data sources, refer to the ['Health'](#) chapter of the *People with disability in Australia 2026* report.