



## National Preventive Health Strategy

# Glossary

**Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander:** a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

**Active travel:** the process of being physically active to make a journey, such as walking and cycling.

**Allied health:** a stream of healthcare that is undertaken by a broad range of health professionals who are not doctors, dentists, nurses or midwives. They use evidence-based practices to prevent, diagnose and treat various conditions and illnesses.

**Burden of disease:** the quantifiable impact of a disease, injury or risk factor on a population, using the disability-adjusted life year (DALY) measure.

**Chronic diseases/conditions:** a diverse group of diseases/conditions, such as heart disease, cancer and arthritis, which tend to be long lasting and persistent in their symptoms or development.

**Community health services:** non-residential health services offered to patients/clients in an integrated and coordinated manner in a community setting, or the coordination of health services elsewhere in the community. Such services are provided by, or on behalf of, state and territory government.

**Comorbidity:** defined in relation to an index disease/condition, comorbidity describes any additional disease that is experienced by a person while they have the index disease.

**Continuity of care:** repeated contact between an individual and their doctor.

**Determinant:** any factor that can increase the chances of ill health (risk factors) or good health (protective factors) in a population or individual. Services or other programs that aim to improve health are usually not included in this definition.

**Digital health:** a term referring to a range of technologies that can be used to treat patients and collect and share a person's health information, including mobile health and applications, electronic health records, telehealth and telemedicine, wearable devices, robotics and artificial intelligence.

**Disability:** an umbrella term for any or all of the following: an impairment of body structure or function, a limitation in activities, or a restriction in participation.

**Disability-adjusted life year (DALY):** a year of healthy life lost, either through premature death or, equivalently, through living with ill health due to illness or injury. It is the basic unit used in burden of disease and injury estimates.

**Discretionary foods:** foods and drinks not necessary to provide the nutrients the body needs, but which may add variety. Many are high in saturated fats, sugars, salt and/or alcohol, and are energy dense.

**Disease:** a physical or mental disturbance involving symptoms (such as pain or feeling unwell), dysfunction or tissue damage, especially if these symptoms and signs form a recognisable clinical pattern.

**Early intervention:** the process of taking action and/or providing support to a person who is experiencing or demonstrating any of the early symptoms of illness.

**Extreme weather event:** an unusual weather event or phenomenon at the extreme of a 'typical' historical distribution, such as a violent storm, exceptionally high levels of rainfall, or a heat wave or drought that is longer or hotter than normal.

**Food insecurity:** limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or the inability to acquire acceptable food in socially acceptable ways that meet dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

**Free sugars:** all monosaccharides and disaccharides added to foods by the manufacturer, cook or consumer, plus the sugars that are naturally present in honey, syrups and fruit juices.

**Harm reduction:** Reducing the adverse health, social and economic consequences of the use of drugs, for the user, their families and the wider community.

**Health:** a state of complete physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or illness.

**Health equity:** the absence of unfair and avoidable differences in health among population groups defined by social, economic, geographical or other demographic factors.

**Health literacy:** the capacity to access, understand, appraise and use information to make health-related decisions in everyday life.

**Health promotion:** a broad term to describe activities that enable communities and individuals increase control over, and improve their health. Health promotion focuses on addressing and preventing the root causes of ill health, rather than on treatment and cure.

**Health system:** all activities with the primary purpose to promote, restore, and maintain health.

**Health-adjusted life expectancy (HALE):** the average number of years that a person at a specific age can expect to live in full health; that is, taking into account years lived in less than full health due to the health consequences of disease and/or injury.

**Immunisation:** the process of both receiving a vaccine and becoming immune to the disease as a result. See also *vaccination*.

**Incidence:** the number of new cases (of an illness or event, and so on) occurring during a given period.

**Infectious disease:** disease or illness caused by infectious agents or their toxic products and can be passed from one person or animal to another. Also referred to as a communicable disease.

**Intergenerational trauma:** exposure of an earlier generation to a traumatic event that continues to affect the subsequent generations.

**Life expectancy:** an indication of how long a person can expect to live, depending on the age they have already reached. Technically, it is the number of years of life left to a person at a particular age if death rates do not change.

**Mortality:** number or rate of deaths in a population during a given time period.

**Obesity:** marked degree of overweight, defined for population studies as body mass index of 30kg/m<sup>2</sup> or over, calculated using height and weight.

**Overweight:** defined for the purpose of population studies as a body mass index of 25kg/m<sup>2</sup> or over. See also *obesity*.

**Person-centred care:** describes the treatment, care and support that places the person at the centre and in control of the design and delivery of their own care, and considers the needs of the person's carers and family.

**Prevalence:** the number or proportion (of cases, instances, and so forth) in a population at a given time.

**Primary health care:** services delivered in many community settings, such as general practices, community health centres, Aboriginal health services and allied health practices which come under numerous funding arrangements.

**Primary Health Networks:** Australian Government funded primary health care organisations which coordinate primary health care delivery and address local health needs and service gaps.

**Protective factors:** factors that enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes and lessen the chance of negative consequences from exposure to risk.

**Public health:** activities aimed at benefiting a population, with an emphasis on prevention, protection and health promotion as distinct from acute treatment tailored to individuals with symptoms.

**Public health workforce:** professionals from a wide range of occupational backgrounds whose main responsibility is the provision of core public health activities to protect and promote the health of whole or specific populations (as distinct from activities directed to the care of individuals).

**Risk factor:** attributes, characteristics or exposures that increase the likelihood of a person developing a disease or health disorder.

**Self-care:** the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider

**Screening (for health):** a systematic method of detecting risk factors or suspicious abnormalities among people who are symptom free, so that health problems can be either prevented or followed up, diagnosed and treated as early as possible.

**Social prescribing:** a means of enabling health professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services in the community. It recognises that people's health and wellbeing are determined mostly by a range of social, economic and environmental factors, and seeks to address people's needs in a holistic way.

**Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA):** a set of indexes, created from Census data, which aim to represent the socioeconomic position of Australian communities and identify areas of advantage and disadvantage. The index value reflects the overall or average level of disadvantage of the population of an area.

**Telehealth:** use of telecommunication techniques for the purpose of providing telemedicine, medical education, and health education over a distance.

**Vaccination:** the process of administering a vaccine to a person to produce immunity against infection. See also *immunisation*.

**Walkability:** the ability to easily and safely walk to goods and services in a neighbourhood/community (i.e., grocery stores, post offices, health clinics, etc.).

**Wellbeing:** it is not just the absence of disease or illness, it is the complex combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional and social factors. Wellbeing is strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction.