

Health-Atlas Cologne

Introduction

Many influential factors play a role in deciding if we are sick or healthy. Our physical and mental characteristics also play a role there, just like our behaviour does, for example, the question if we have been eating healthy, exercising or if we have been smoking. Even the health care in clinics and hospitals influence our health. A similar important role is played by other factors, the so called “Social determinants of health”. These include e.g. education, the way we live and work, how much money we have to live with, whether we are discriminated against, how many green spaces and how much traffic noise we have to live with or how many cultural opportunities are available to us. Poverty research, for example, shows how much these factors influence our health. An important finding uncovered from this research is that poor people are twice as likely to be ill and die earlier than wealthy people. Here we show you a few examples that show that the living conditions are not the same everywhere in Cologne. You can find our entire health atlas here:

solimed-koeln.de/gesundheitsatlas-koeln/

Source: International Centre for Health and Society, 2004

How many general practitioners are there actually in my district?

Unequal distribution of medical care in Cologne

The quarters on the right bank of the Rhine are less equipped with general practitioners and specialists, pharmacies, and dentists than the quarters on the left bank of the Rhine.

In Kalk a family doctor looks after **1,291** people, in Lindenthal only **994** people.

How are the people in my neighbourhood actually doing health-wise?

Unequal state of health and different life-expectancy in Cologne

On the right bank of the Rhine, more people have chronic diseases such as diabetes, lung diseases and heart diseases. In Kalk, **12.8%** of people have type 2 diabetes mellitus ("old age sugar"), in Lindenthal it is only **9.5%**.

In Cologne Mülheim, **756** people were treated in the hospital for a respiratory disease in 2018, compared to only **375** in Lindenthal.

Als, the distribution of people suffering from COVID-19 was and is different in Cologne. And worst of all: All of this also affects the life expectancy of people in Cologne: In Cologne Mülheim, people die **6** years earlier than in Lindenthal on an average! That's unfair. That is why we want to fight with you for fairer living conditions.

How poor are the people in my neighborhood? Unequal distribution of unemployment in Cologne

Having less money can make you sick. Many unemployed people have little money. Refugees or people without a permanent place of residence also often have very little money. Unemployment, displacement or homelessness all have a significant impact on health. And ultimately, the people affected die sooner. It is not entirely clear how these particularly endangered people are distributed in Cologne. But what is clear, however, is that the number of people receiving unemployment benefits or Hartz 4 differ massively in the individual city districts. In Kalk, **27%** of the people depend on Hartz 4, while in Lindenthal the number is less than **5%**. The old-age poverty in Kalk is significantly higher than the average of Cologne: **19%** of the people in Kalk receive basic security benefits in old age, the Cologne average is **8%**.

What kind of schooling do the people in my neighbourhood actually have? Uneven distribution of school qualifications in Cologne

A possibly higher school leaving certificate is important in our society. People with a high school leaving certificate usually can earn more money later than people with a low school leaving certificate. In Kalk, an average of **45%** of students graduate from high school, in Lindenthal it is **74%**. In Kalk every fifth pupil leaves school with no more than a secondary school leaving certificate, in Lindenthal only every tenth.

How much space do people actually have in my neighbourhood to live in? Unequal distribution of living space (and quality?) In Cologne

A good quality of living and enough space to live in are important for our well-being and thus also for our health. Our income determines which apartment we can and cannot afford. How we live is also unevenly distributed in Cologne, at least when it comes to the size of the apartment. In Kalk, each person has an average of **35m²** available. In Lindenthal it is **45m²**. In Kalk, the proportion of people who apply for a

housing entitlement certificate (Wohnberechtigungsschein) is **6%** and is one of the highest in Cologne. In Lindenthal this proportion is **0-2%**.

How healthy is the environment in my neighbourhood for me? Uneven distribution of environmental factors in Cologne

All of this determines whether we are healthy or sick. The quality of the air we breathe, the street noise we hear even when the windows are closed, the heat stress in our neighbourhood and the opportunities to have exposure to green spaces. All of this determines whether we are healthy or sick. To put it simply, poorer people are more often affected by environmental pollution than richer people. In 2015, almost **2,000** people lived in Kalk, who were so highly exposed to noise all day and all night, almost as if a vacuum cleaner was on 1 meter away for 24 hours (over 70dB (A)). That is almost every **10th** person in Kalk. Cars, airplanes, and the trams are mainly responsible for this noise pollution. The heat load will increase for almost half of the people in Cologne due to the climate crisis. Elderly people, children, people with previous illnesses and people with restricted mobility are particularly at risk. It is estimated that between **66 - 95%** of the people in Kalk will be affected by harmful heat loads in the future. It is therefore important that there are as many green places as possible in the city and in the district. However, green spaces are also unevenly distributed in Cologne. While **5-10%** of the area in Kalk is covered by green, in Lindenthal it is more than twice the amount.

Unanswered questions in Cologne

Many other factors influence whether we are healthy or sick. Stress, (socio-economic) insecurities, experiences of discrimination or loneliness are, for example, contributory causes of various illnesses, especially those of the heart and the circulatory system. There are (yet) no data on this topic for the city of Cologne.

What now?

Our living conditions have a major impact on our health. In order to make good health possible for all people, health care and preventive health care must therefore also consider our living conditions. We have a lot of ideas on how this could work. For example, we want to build a district health centre in Kalk. Such a centre is not just about medical care. We want to work with the people in the district in order to

ensure that good health is possible for everyone. You can find out more about this on the poster for our district health centre.