

Definition and Scope of Public Health

Public Health – Definition & Scope

(A concise, organized overview for study or quick reference)

1. What Is Public Health?

Aspect	Description
Core Definition	The science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through organized community efforts.
Key Elements	• Population-focused – targets groups, not just individuals. • Prevention-oriented – aims to stop health problems before they start. • Collective action – involves government, NGOs, private sector, and the public.
Goal	Improve the health of entire communities and reduce health inequities.

2. Fundamental Functions of Public Health

Function	Typical Activities
Assessment	Surveillance of diseases, health surveys, environmental monitoring, community health needs assessments.
Policy Development	Formulating health regulations, guidelines, and legislation; cost-effectiveness analysis; advocacy for health-promoting policies.
Assurance	Ensuring access to essential services, enforcing standards, evaluating program effectiveness, responding to emergencies.

3. Core Disciplines & Areas of Practice

Discipline	Primary Focus
Epidemiology	Study of disease distribution & determinants; outbreak investigation.
Biostatistics	Data analysis, modeling, and interpretation for health research.
Environmental Health	Air, water, food safety; occupational health; climate impact.

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Discipline	Primary Focus
Health Promotion & Education	Behavior change strategies, health literacy, community outreach.
Social & Behavioral Sciences	Social determinants, cultural factors, health equity.
Health Services Administration	Planning, financing, and managing health systems.
Global Health	Cross-border health issues, international disease control, health diplomacy.

4. Levels of Intervention

Level	Description	Example
Primary	Prevent disease before it occurs.	Immunization programs, tobacco control policies.
Secondary	Early detection & prompt treatment.	Cancer screening, contact tracing for infectious diseases.
Tertiary	Reduce complications & improve quality of life.	Rehabilitation services, chronic disease management programs.

5. Determinants of Health (Scope of Influence)

Domain	Influencing Factors
Biological	Genetics, age, sex.
Behavioral	Diet, physical activity, substance use.
Social	Education, income, employment, housing, social support.
Physical Environment	Air/water quality, built environment, climate.
Health Services	Access, quality, affordability of care.
Policy & Governance	Laws, regulations, taxation, public investments.

6. Public Health Settings & Stakeholders

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Setting

Typical Actors

Government

Ministries/Departments of Health, local health agencies, regulatory bodies.

Community Organizations

NGOs, faith-based groups, neighborhood associations.

Academic & Research Institutions

Schools of public health, research labs, think-tanks.

Healthcare Providers

Hospitals, clinics, primary-care networks (as partners in prevention).

Private Sector

Employers, insurers, food & beverage industry, technology firms.

International Bodies

WHO, PAHO, UNICEF, World Bank.

7. Legal & Ethical Foundations

1. **