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From Brethren Insurance Services

# WellNow

A resource for your health and wellness

*From our Insurance team*

## The healthy cities to live in

**Insurance  
enrollment is  
moving online**

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**H**ave you ever asked whether it is healthy to travel through or live in a city? The stereotype is of smoky, smog-cloaked urban spaces with summer haze alerts, especially the old industrial cities. While there are still cities in need of improvement, there are many that can claim to be healthy places to live. So, where are these healthy cities? The answers may surprise you.

We live in the digital age, with nearly everything happening online or on a screen. We have focused before on the intersection of the digital world and medicine, but we want to do it again by featuring the Sharecare app that is integrated with your Brethren Medical

- Plan. Sharecare was co-founded by health innovator Jeff Arnold (founder of WebMD) and Dr. Mehmet Oz to address the fragmentation in health tools enhancing the ways that information, technology, content, and partner relationships can come together in one platform. Today, Sharecare is the leading digital health company, linking millions of people across the health system. If you haven't already signed up, you can do so at [my.sharecare.com](https://my.sharecare.com), and be sure to enter your information exactly as it appears on your Highmark member ID card. If you are not a member of the BMP, you can still sign up for the generic version of Sharecare by downloading the app on your phone, or going to [sharecare.com](https://sharecare.com) and clicking on 'join.' ■

*Lynnae, Tammy, Jeremiah, Ed, and Connie*

# The healthiest cities



When you are driving or walking through a city on your summer travels, do you ever wonder if it's a healthy place? Are you tempted to think that because it's a city it probably isn't healthy?



## Who's on top?

If you Google “healthiest cities in the United States” many lists will come up, and if you compare the top 10 on each list, you will find great differences. San Francisco appears at the top of two lists and is in the top ten on every other list. On the other hand, Miami and Minneapolis/St. Paul are each first on one list but then do not appear in the top ten of any other list. In addition to San Francisco, Seattle also appears on all the top ten lists, though never first. Surprisingly, Washington, D.C. appears on all but one list. New York appears twice, Portland, Oregon appears on three lists and San Diego on four. There are more California cities on the top ten lists than cities from any other state.

## What are the criteria?

Well, these lists are highly subjective. And the criteria used is different from list to list. Probably the most exhaustive and carefully compiled list has been done by “WalletHub,” which is a personal finance website based in Washington, D.C. 182 cities were studied using 44 different criteria in four main areas: healthcare, food, fitness, and green space.

Another website called “Mindbody Business” bases its ranking on “seven dimensions of wellness”—physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, environmental, social, and occupational. <https://www.mindbodyonline.com/business>.

On the accompanying grid you will find the rankings from the five different lists that were considered. You will also find the website link for each list.

## What else makes for a “healthy” place?

Interestingly, in a time when “infrastructure” is in the news, little is said in these studies about streets and bridges and public transit. Only the ranking of healthiest counties takes this into consideration. How important to one's health is the ability to get easily from one place to another? Further, there is little mention of crime. Presumably being safe from mugging, assault, theft, and murder makes a place “healthier.”

## We can do better

As environmental and healthcare concerns increase, as we all pay more and more attention to food, fitness, mental health, and social connections, and as we continue to become urbanized, the concern about how healthy a city or region is will only increase. This may only be the beginning. We all need healthy places to live and thrive, and we know we can do better. As former Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas said, “I’ve often thought that if planners were botanists, zoologists, geologists, and people who know about the earth, we would have much more wisdom in such planning than we have when we leave it to the engineers.” ■



# The “WalletHub” criteria

Knowing the criteria used to compile a list may help you think about your own city or region and what public action might be undertaken to make your area healthier.

The financial app called WalletHub has created a thorough template for judging the healthiness of a community. It has ranked 182 cities using the criteria on this page.



## Health

- Premature death rate
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Family doctors per capita
- Dentists per capita
- Cost of medical visit
- Cost of dental visit
- Cost of basic medicine
- Quality of public health system
- Number of COVID cases and deaths per capita
- Hospital beds per capita
- Health insurance coverage
- Adults who have visited a doctor in past year
- Adults who have checked their cholesterol
- Mammography screenings
- People receiving core preventive services



## Food

- Fruit and vegetable consumption
- Farmers Markets per capita
- Gourmet food stores per capita
- Healthy restaurants per capita
- Dietitians and nutritionists per capita
- Number of residents who say they eat healthy
- Number of obese residents
- Limited access to stores with healthy food



## Fitness

- Adults who engage in physical activity
- Number of people in good health, and able to get things done each day
- Number of fitness centers per capita
- Average cost of fitness club membership
- Weight loss centers per capita
- Fitness trainers and aerobics instructors per capita

## Greenspace



- Parkland acres per capita
- Quality of the parks
- Hiking trails per capita
- Running trails per capita
- Walking trails per capita
- Walk score measuring how accessible amenities are by walking
- Bike score measuring availability of bike lanes, the hilliness, the road connectivity, and accessibility to nearby amenities
- Access to places for physical activity
- Air quality and “green” transportation
- Recreation access

# The healthiest cities

## Lists from 5 popular websites

### WalletHub

1. San Francisco
2. Seattle
3. Portland, Ore.
4. San Diego
5. Honolulu
6. Washington, D.C.
7. Austin
8. Irvine, Calif.
9. Portland, Maine
10. Denver

### The Do - AOA\*

\*American Osteopathic Association

1. San Francisco
2. Seattle
3. San Diego
4. Portland, Ore.
5. Washington, D.C.
6. New York City
7. Denver
8. Irvine, Calif.
9. Scottsdale
10. Chicago

### Niche

1. Berkely, Calif.
2. Irvine, Calif.
3. San Francisco
4. Torrence, Calif.
5. Seattle
6. Bellevue, Wash.
7. Boulder
8. Pasadena
9. Cambridge, Mass.
10. Costa Mesa

### HGTV

1. Minneapolis-St. Paul
2. Washington, D.C.
3. San Francisco
4. Seattle
5. San Jose
6. Boston
7. Denver
8. Portland, Ore.
9. Salt Lake City
10. San Diego

### Mindbody Business

1. Miami
2. Atlanta
3. San Francisco
4. New York City
5. Washington, D.C.
6. San Jose
7. Los Angeles
8. San Diego
9. Houston
10. Seattle



### 10 HEALTHIEST COUNTIES

U.S. News

1. Los Alamos County, New Mexico
2. Douglas County, Colorado
3. Falls Church, Virginia
4. Loudoun County, Virginia
5. Broomfield County, Colorado
6. San Miguel County, Colorado
7. Pitkin County, Colorado
8. Howard County, Maryland
9. Morgan County, Utah
10. Routt County, Colorado

### What about other healthy places?

In the studies cited, the city itself is considered, not the larger metro area. Presumably, the rankings would be different if the whole metropolitan region were under scrutiny. Suppose you were wondering which counties are the healthiest? A U.S. News study of counties gives a much different picture than the listings of healthy cities. Of the 10 healthiest counties in the U.S., five are in Colorado. None have a large city, though some are not far from a major metropolitan area. The criteria are population health, equity, education, economy, housing, food and nutrition, environment, public safety, community vitality, and infrastructure. (See the grid.)



# Which is good for what?

You can see how nearly impossible it is to say which places are the healthiest, but on the other hand, it is safe to say that any place that appears on any of these lists is likely a good place to live or to visit. Still, you have to look closely at the criteria behind the lists to see which is good for what.



Scottsdale and Salt Lake City rank at the top in fitness, as does Miami.

And San Francisco is tied with Atlanta for the highest percentage of people with normal body mass index.



San Francisco and Los Angeles have the fewest smokers.

You may be surprised to learn that New York City ranks high in happiness, spiritual fulfillment, and community connections.



For green space, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. are tops.

65 percent of the residents of Washington, D.C. say they get 7-8 hours of sleep each night, thus ranking that city third in sleep satisfaction.



San Francisco and San Miguel County, Colorado, rate very high for food.

South Burlington, Vermont, rates first in health care, and Los Alamos County, New Mexico, has a very healthy population.



Douglas County, Colorado, and Loudon County, Virginia, have strong economies.

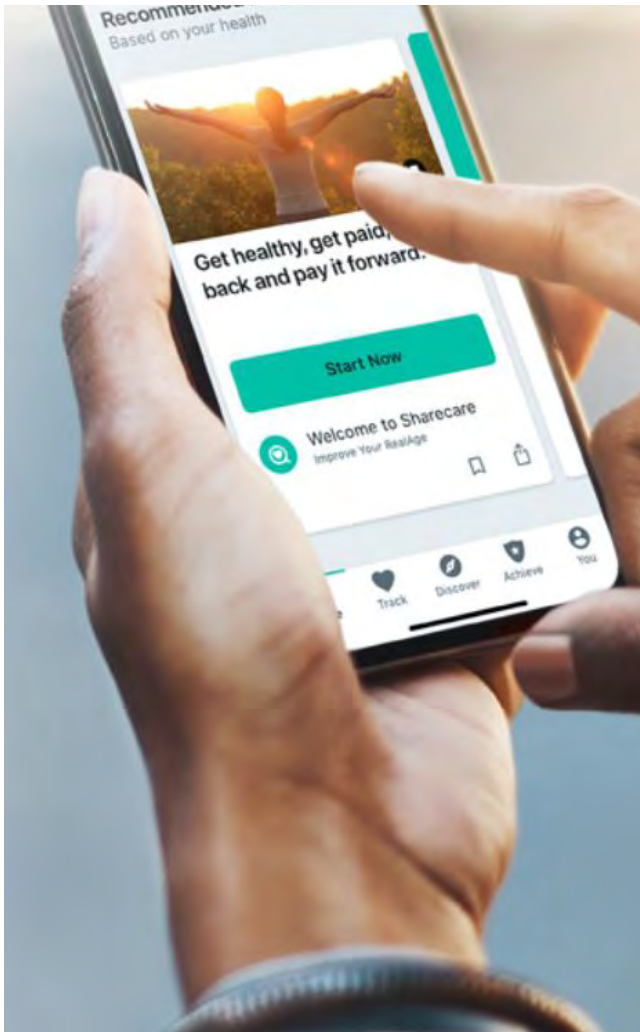
Atlanta holds the title of most spiritually fulfilled, and the residents there have a strong sense of community.



# What is Sharecare?

## It's like healthcare in your pocket

If you don't know about Sharecare, you are missing out on a sophisticated health tracking app that works through your smartphone. It's a healthcare program in your pocket!



Here are some of the impressive things it does for you —

- It does tests and analysis to measure your “**RealAge**.” That means it will tell you how old you really are depending on your health, not your actual years. And it will make recommendations for you to “lower” this “real age”— things you can do to improve your health and help you live longer.
- It can track your steps and offer you an incentive and a personalized message telling you how many steps you are away from reaching your goal.
- You can receive notifications of a **new diet for weight loss** or reminders of **biometric screenings** being scheduled by your health insurance plan.
- You can personalize the settings to **track all of following** if that is your preference: blood pressure, cholesterol, smoke exposure, stress level, and alcohol consumption.
- It can **record your vitals over time**, your various health conditions, your medications, and your lab tests.
- You can earn “**Green Days**,” which are the “health currency” used to measure your progress. Each Green Day earned reduces your RealAge.



The app includes calming and relaxation videos, sleep aids, anger management tools, alternative medicine articles, nutrition challenges, and more.

Sharecare is offered as a benefit through the Brethren Medical Plan, but not everyone reading this has that coverage. If you are a member of another insurance program, check out the free version of Sharecare at [sharecare.com](https://sharecare.com).

If you are a Brethren Insurance Services client and have questions, you can contact Jeremiah Thompson, director of Insurance Operations, at 1-800-746-1501, ext. 3368, or at [jthompson@cobbt.org](mailto:jthompson@cobbt.org).

# Can you believe it?

Cities have actually been ranked by humor! However, the list seems pretty serious. [Click here](#) to learn what the “humor algorithm” is, how the list was created, and the unique humor of each city.

**Here are the top ten funniest cities, as revealed by the humor algorithm —**

1. Chicago
2. Boston
3. Atlanta
4. Washington, D.C.
5. Portland, Oregon
6. New York City
7. Los Angeles
8. Denver
9. San Francisco
10. Seattle

## Brethren Insurance Services offers Long-Term Care Insurance all through the year



If you're interested in purchasing coverage, you should know that eligibility for benefits is determined by the inability to meet at least two of these six activities of daily living—bathing, eating, dressing, toileting, continence, or transferring. Cognitive impairment can also trigger benefits.

It's difficult to think about the fact that a debilitating condition or a disabling injury might leave you unable to care for yourself, or that when you reach your twilight years, the time will come when you will need some extra care. Long-term care

insurance makes sure that you will get the care you need. It helps assure that the cost of your custodial care will not eat up your savings. Finally, and this is one of the best things about LTCI, it can help protect your children and other relatives from having to use their resources to care for you.

Brethren Insurance Services offers Long-Term Care Insurance for all members and employees of the Church of the Brethren and their family and friends; and also for employees of Church of the Brethren-affiliated agencies, organizations, colleges, and retirement communities and their families and friends.

If you are interested in obtaining this coverage, contact Brethren Insurance Services at [insurance@cobbt.org](mailto:insurance@cobbt.org) or 800-746-1505 for a free, no-obligation proposal.



### About us

Church of the Brethren Insurance Services provides the following products - dental, vision, basic life and accidental death & dismemberment, supplemental life and AD&D, dependent life and AD&D, long-term disability, short-term disability, accident insurance, and Medicare supplement for eligible Church of the Brethren employees

Dental, vision, and Medicare supplement coverage may also be available for eligible retired Church of the Brethren employees.

For eligibility information, call Connie Sandman at 800-746-1505, ext. 3366, or contact your human resources representative.

Medical and ancillary plans (named above) may be available to Brethren-affiliated employer groups.

Long-Term Care Insurance is available for all members of the Church of the Brethren, their family and friends, and employees of Church of the Brethren-affiliated agencies, organizations, colleges, and retirement communities.