Belgium

Health at a Glance provides the latest comparable data and trends on population health and health system performance. This Country Note shows how Belgium compares to other OECD countries across indicators in the report.

How does Belgium perform overall?

This section shows key indicators, and also how often Belgium is above the OECD average on relevant indicators (where data are available for Belgium).

Health status

Key indicators:
Life expectancy was 81.9 years, 1.6 years above the OECD average. Preventable mortality was 121 per 100,000 (lower than the OECD average of 158); with treatable mortality at 57 per 100,000 (lower than the OECD average of 79). 8% of people rated their health as bad or very bad (OECD average 7.9%). Diabetes prevalence was lower than the OECD average.

Belgium perfoms better than the OECD average on 84% of indicators

(Based on 19 indicators, data missing for 0 indicators)

Risk factors

Key indicators:
Smoking prevalence, at 15.4%, was close to the OECD average of 16.0%. Alcohol consumption was close to the OECD average; at 9.2 litres per capita versus 8.6. Obesity prevalence was 21.2%, lower than the OECD average of 25.7%. There were 30.3 deaths from air pollution per 100,000 population (OECD average 28.9).

Belgium perfoms better than the OECD average on 46% of indicators

(Based on 13 indicators, data missing for 0 indicators)

Quality of care

Key indicators:
Acute care: 30-day mortality after stroke was 8.2% (OECD average 7.8%), and 4.3% after AMI (OECD average 6.8%). Primary care: There were 633 avoidable admissions per 100,000 population, more than the OECD average of 463. Safe prescribing: Belgium prescribed more antibiotics than on average in the OECD. Preventive care: 56% of women were screened for breast cancer, similar to the OECD average of 55%.

Belgium perfoms better than the OECD average on 78% of indicators

(Based on 18 indicators, data missing for 15 indicators)
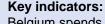
Access to care

Key indicators:
Almost all of the population is covered for a core set of services. 90% of people were satisfied with the availability of quality healthcare (OECD average 67%). Financial coverage, with 78% of spending covered by mandatory prepayment, was similar to the OECD average of 76%. Out-of-pocket spending, at 18% of health expenditure, was similar to the OECD average of 18%. 1.7% of the population reported unmet needs (OECD average 2.3%).

Belgium perfoms better than the OECD average on 60% of indicators

(Based on 15 indicators, data missing for 3 indicators)

Health system resources

Key indicators:
Belgium spends $6600 per capita on health, more than the OECD average of $4986 (USD PPP). This is equal to 10.9% of GDP, compared to 9.2% on average in the OECD. There are 3.3 practising doctors per 1,000 population (OECD average 3.7); and 11.1 practising nurses (OECD average 9.2). Belgium has 5.5 hospital beds per 1,000 population, more than the OECD average of 4.3.

Belgium is above the OECD average on 73% of indicators

(Based on 30 indicators, data missing for 2 indicators)

Note: Overall comparisons of health status, risk factors, access, quality and resources are unweighted and therefore not measures of performance; OECD averages for quality of care are based on Chapter 1 (and differ slightly from averages in Chapter 6 due to differences in country coverage)

On which indicators does Belgium perfom well or badly?

The graphs below show selected indicators from Health at a Glance 2023 where the performance of Belgium deviates markedly from the OECD on average. For more details on the data presented, please refer to the full report, using the graph references provided (e.g. g5.1).

Belgium: 🟢 Better 🔴 Worse 🔵 Higher 🔵 Lower   ⚪ OECD average ⚪ Other OECD countries

Health status

Indicator	Min	Belgium	OECD average	Max
Long standing illness prevalence (g3.15)	18.6	25.0 (Better)	35.4	50.6
People aged 65+ in good health (g10.5)	9.9	59.3 (Better)	45.9	86.9
Diabetes prevalence (g3.16)	3.0	3.6 (Better)	7.0	16.9
Suicide mortality rate (g3.21)	3.9	15.2 (Worse)	11.3	24.1

Risk factors

Indicator	Min	Belgium	OECD average	Max
Obesity prevalence (measured) (g4.13)	4.6	21.2 (Better)	25.7	42.8
5 or more fruit and vegetables (g4.10)	2.8	15.3 (Better)	13.5	33.1
Heavy drinking prevalence (g4.5)	2.9	27.7 (Worse)	19.2	37.0
Vaping prevalence (g4.3)	0.7	4.1 (Worse)	3.2	10.4

Quality of care

Indicator	Min	Belgium	OECD average	Max
Avoidable admissions: heart failure (g6.10)	34.9	141.5 (Better)	205.6	458.8
Avoidable admissions: asthma/COPD (g6.9)	18.3	194.5 (Worse)	129.1	277.2
Children vaccinated for DTP (g6.1)	83.4	98.0 (Better)	93.5	99.9
30-day AMI mortality (g6.23)	1.7	4.3 (Better)	7.0	23.7

Access to care

Indicator	Min	Belgium	OECD average	Max
Satisfaction with coverage (g5.2)	39.0	90.0 (Better)	66.8	94.0
Unmet LTC needs (g10.14)	26.9	39.2 (Better)	50.1	70.3
Share of generics (% of volume) (g9.7)	17.6	35.9 (Worse)	54.1	89.6
Providers using EMRs (g5.14)	30.0	80.0 (Worse)	92.8	100.0

Health system resources

Indicator	Min	Belgium	OECD average	Max
Expenditure per capita (USD PPP) (g7.4)	1181.0	6600.0 (Higher)	4986.3	12555.3
Nurse remuneration: USD PPP (g8.16)	23.9	88.5 (Higher)	52.0	108.0
Employment in health sector vs total (g8.1)	3.2	13.4 (Higher)	10.5	21.4
Share of spending on prevention (g7.18)	1.6	3.1 (Lower)	5.5	12.5

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