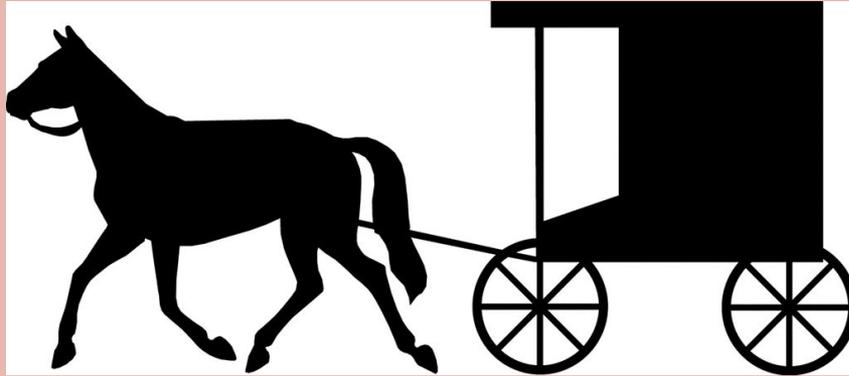


The Amish Community



Tyranny Davis, Tracy Donaldson, Madalyn Goble, & Sarah Minacci

History

The Amish church was established in the late 17th century and consisted of followers of Jakob Amman (Britannica, 2023).

These communities arose in Switzerland, Alsace, Germany, Russia, and Holland. They then migrated to North America in the 18th century (Britannica, 2023).

The Amish are very simple people whose faith influences every aspect of their life. This population follows a set of unwritten rules known as the *Ordnung*. Anyone caught breaking these rules are likely to be shunned (Britannica, 2023).

Most members of the Amish community wear very simple clothing. They also do not have a telephone in their homes but do have access to a communal phone in case of emergency. The Amish also refrain from using technology unless absolutely necessary (Britannica, 2023).

Members of the Amish community use a horse and buggy to move from place to place (Britannica, 2023).

The Amish church is very important to the Amish community and it shapes how they live their lives (Britannica, 2023).



Jakob Ammann
Founder of the Amish
branch of Mennonites

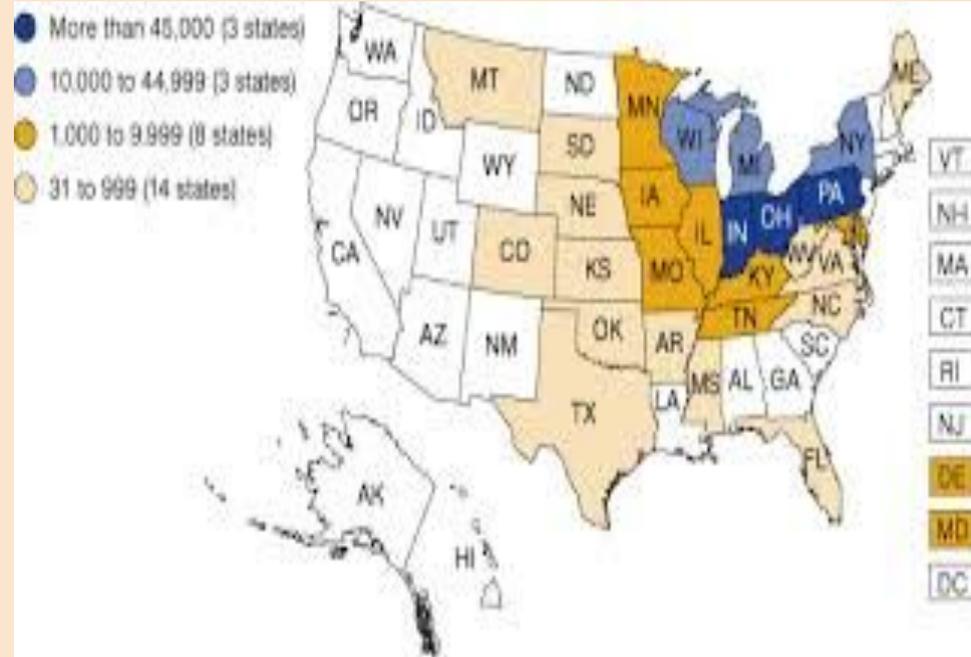
Demographics in the United States

In June of 2022, there were around 373,620 members of the Amish community living in the United States (*Amish Population Profile, 2022, n.d.*).

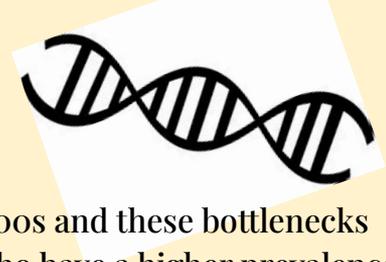
There are members of the Amish community in 32 states across the country (*Amish Population Profile, 2022, n.d.*).

62% of these members are estimated to live in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana (*Amish Population Profile, 2022, n.d.*).

Groups made up of 20-40 families, called congregations, are spread all over the states and it is estimated that there were around 2,800 congregations as of 2022 (*Amish Population Profile, 2022, n.d.*).



Diseases Affecting Amish Communities



Amish communities are unique and demonstrate genetic bottlenecks going back to the 1700s and these bottlenecks continue today due to geographic and social isolation. This creates smaller populations who have a higher prevalence of genetic disorders, mostly recessive disorders due to consanguinity (Anderson & Potts, 2022). Therefore “common” diseases are also specific to each area and vary from community to community (Anderson & Potts, 2022).

- **Pyruvate Kinase Deficiency**, a disorder which causes RBCs to breakdown faster than normal, leading to anemia (Biochemical Genetics Laboratory, n.d.)
- **Maple Syrup Urine Disease**, a disorder where the body can't process certain amino acids and this causes neurologic dysfunction, muscle weakness, seizures and eventually death (Biochemical Genetics Laboratory, n.d.)
- **Ellis-van Creveld Syndrome** is a rare genetic disorder that is a type of dwarfism and often involves polydactyly (Biochemical Genetics Laboratory, n.d.)
- Higher rates of **leukemia** in Amish youth and higher rates of **breast cancer** in Amish women (Anderson & Potts, 2022).
- May have higher rates of **cardiovascular diseases**.
 - In one study of a New York population of Amish, 54% of all deaths in their community were due to cardiovascular problems. Though other studies have found possible genetic protective factors against cardiovascular disease in some communities (Anderson & Potts, 2022).
- Due to lower vaccination rates, rubella, pertussis, measles, and other **communicable diseases** sometimes become an epidemic to communities (Anderson & Potts, 2022).

Interesting Health Facts about the Amish

- The Amish may have stronger immune systems due to exposure to farm animals. One study found that Amish babies had a greater variety of microbes and more beneficial bacteria in their bodies.
- The Amish have lower rates of asthma compared to general population
- Amish cancer rates are generally lower than the non-Amish population
 - There is debate over whether this is due to under-reporting or if the Amish's diet and physical activity plays a more protective role.
- Amish people tend to live longer than non-Amish, this again may be due to their higher rate of physical activity and diet.



(Anderson & Potts, 2022)

Diet



(Newby, J. R., n.d)

- Hearty meals...think Thanksgiving
- Things they grow and farm: fruits, vegetables, meat, less processed things, preserve and pickle many things at home
- Subjected to what's in the soil they're growing things in
- Heavy use of supplements, herbal and nutritional especially echinacea and garlic
- Also go to the store so they have access to the things we do
- False assumption that it is “healthier” than the general population, but their diet does include more whole grains and vegetables than the average American.
- Butter, lard, salt

(Anderson & Potts, 2022)

Access to Healthcare

Mindset- The Amish want to deal with health issues as they arise rather than preventative care (Anderson & Potts, 2020).

Transportation - limited to taxis, which they call from a neighbor, or a slow moving vehicle such as an Amish buggy (Anderson & Potts, 2020).

Limited knowledge- rely on advice from older generations and many may be unaware of services available until they hold meetings to distribute written material (Anderson & Potts, 2020).

Health Insurance- most do not carry health insurance but will accept support from hospitals, foundations, or personal donations. Some Amish communities pay monthly dues to their church towards medical expenses for the community that they live. If their healthcare is a large bill, they will accept Government assistance (Anderson & Potts, 2020).

Healthcare centers that place a specific emphasis on care for their Amish communities:

-Clinic for Special Children in Strasburg, Pennsylvania (<https://clinicforspecialchildren.org/>)

-The Community Health Clinic in Shipshewana, Indiana (<https://www.indianachc.org/>)

-SIFH Healthcare in Arthur, Illinois (https://www.sihf.org/health-center/arthur?utm_source=GMBSocialClimb&utm_medium=SIHFHealthcare-Arthur)

- Pomerene Hospital in Millersburg, Ohio

(<https://www.pomerenehospital.org/amish-services#:~:text=Pomerene%20Hospital%20is%20located%20in,Amish%20House%E2%80%9D%20on%20our%20premises.>)



Beliefs Related to Healthcare

Natural Healthcare- spiritual practice, natural remedies and supplements, complementary and alternative medication such as chiropractors, “folk healers”, massage therapists, and reflexologists over modern medicine. The exception is they will use modern medicine if necessary with a traumatic event or obstetric care in conjunction with complementary and alternative measures. Midwife assisted births are utilized over birthing centers.

Homecare- is chosen over institutionalized care. A strong support system is available and the family offspring find it satisfying and an honor to take care of their elders.

Distrust - American medical and pharmaceutical system are distrusted. They believe it is all for the profit of the Government and big corporations.



(Anderson & Potts, 2020)

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