



NYC Vital Signs

One in 6 New York City Adults Is Obese

Between 1991 and 2001, obesity levels nearly doubled among adults in the United States, increasing from 12% to 21%. New York City adults are slightly less obese than the national average, but findings from a 2002 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene survey, presented here, reveal that 18% of New Yorkers, or 1 in every 6 adults, is obese.

“Overweight” and “obese” are defined by a person’s body mass index (BMI). BMI is based on a person’s body weight, adjusted for height. An adult with a BMI between 25 and 30 is classified as *overweight* (for example, a person who weighs 170 lbs and is 5’9” would be considered overweight). An adult

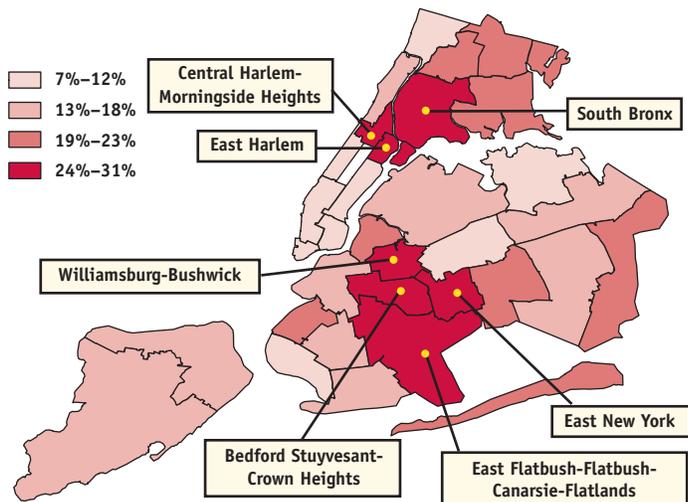
with a BMI of 30 or greater is classified as *obese* (a person who weighs 204 lbs and is 5’9” would be considered obese). To calculate BMI, visit <http://nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>.

This report presents newly available data on the extent of overweight and obesity among New York City adults, as well as data on physical activity and eating habits. People who are overweight are at increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, arthritis, and cancer. Even modest amounts of regular physical activity and healthy eating habits can prevent weight gain and promote weight loss, as well as substantially reduce the risk for developing these diseases.

In some neighborhoods, 1 in every 4 adults is obese

- More than half (53%) of New York City adults—2.8 million people—are overweight or obese.
- 18% of the city’s adult population—980,000 people—are obese.
- Obesity levels among adults are highest in the Bronx (24%), followed by Brooklyn (21%), Staten Island (18%), Queens (16%), and Manhattan (13%).
- In some neighborhoods, as many as 1 in 4 adults are obese: Central and East Harlem, the South Bronx, East New York, Flatbush-Canarsie-Flatlands, Bedford Stuyvesant-Crown Heights, and Williamsburg-Bushwick.

Proportion of adults who are obese

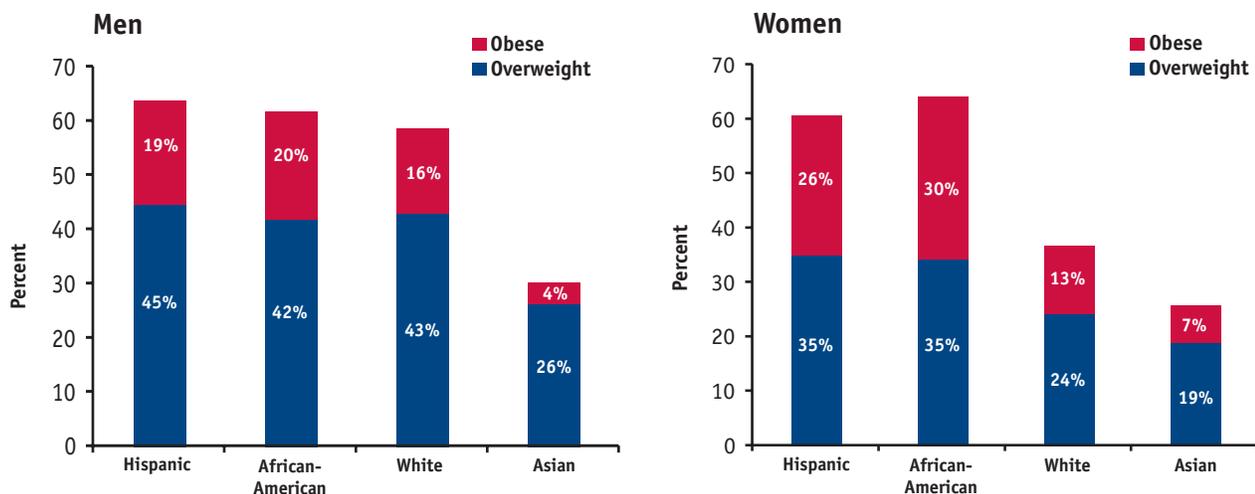


Obesity is more common among older adults, women, African-Americans and Hispanics, and the poor

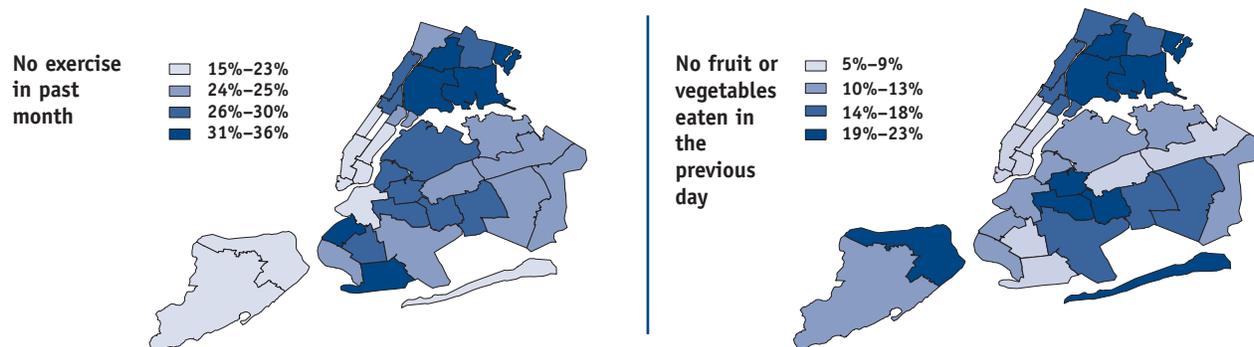
- Obesity increases with age, from less than 10% among adults 18-29 years to 27% among those 50-64 years. Among people 75 years and older, 13% are obese.
- The proportion of men who are overweight (41%) is higher than women (29%). Yet more women than men are obese (20% vs 16%).
- African-American and Hispanic New Yorkers are more likely to be obese than white or Asian adults.
- Among white New Yorkers, levels of obesity are much lower in Manhattan (7%) than in other boroughs (15% or greater). For other racial/ethnic groups, obesity levels are similar across the boroughs.
- Obesity is more common among the poor. More than 1 in 5 adults (22%) with a household income of less than \$25,000 is obese, compared to 14% of adults with a household income greater than \$50,000.

	% Overweight	% Obese	Number obese
Total	35	18	971,000
Age (in years)			
18-39	29	9	124,000
30-49	36	18	407,000
50-64	38	27	281,000
65-74	39	24	114,000
75+	40	14	46,000
Sex			
Men	41	16	411,000
Women	29	20	560,000
Race/Ethnicity			
African-American	38	26	316,000
Hispanic	39	23	264,000
White	33	14	327,000
Asian	24	5	28,000
Income			
< \$25,000	35	22	348,000
\$25,000-\$50,000	34	19	288,000
> \$50,000	36	15	222,000

Obesity levels are very high (more than 25%) among African-American and Hispanic women



Neighborhoods that report less physical activity and less fruit and vegetable consumption have higher obesity levels

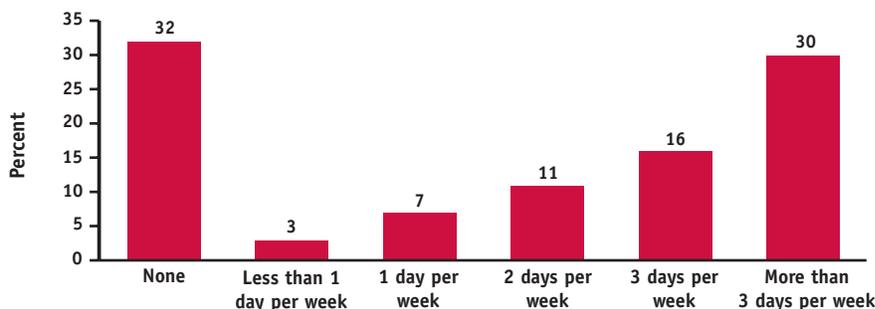


- New Yorkers in the South Bronx and Central Brooklyn report less physical activity and eat fewer fruits and vegetables than the rest of the city. Poor fruit and vegetable consumption is also reported in Northern Staten Island and the Far Rockaways.

The national goal is to reduce the percent of adults who get no exercise to less than 20%. Few groups have achieved this in New York.

- One-quarter (26%) of New Yorkers reported no physical activity in the past month, and 14% report not eating fruits or vegetables in the previous day.
- Sedentary behavior increases with age. Among New Yorkers age 65 and older, 34% reported they had no exercise in the past month.
- Women report doing less physical exercise than men.
- More Hispanic and Asian adults report no exercise than African-American and white adults.
- Twice as many African-American and Hispanic adults report not eating fruit or vegetables in the previous day as whites and Asians (18% or higher vs 9%).
- Exercise and fruit and vegetable consumption increase as income level goes up.

	% No exercise in past month (sedentary)	% No fruit or vegetables eaten the previous day
Total	26	14
Age (in years)		
18-44	23	17
45-64	28	12
65+	34	10
Sex		
Men	23	15
Women	30	14
Race/Ethnicity		
African-American	28	18
Hispanic	34	21
White	20	9
Asian	31	10
Income		
< \$25,000	35	17
\$25,000-\$50,000	25	14
> \$50,000	16	10



On average, only 30% of New Yorkers exercise most days of the week

Recommendations

Weight control is strongly recommended for all adults.

- Adults should try to keep their body mass index [BMI] under 25.
- Over time, even a small increase in physical activity and a small drop in calories consumed can facilitate weight loss, prevent weight gain, and promote longer, healthier lives.
- Learn more about weight control at: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/index.htm.

✓ Increase activity:

- The health benefits of physical activity are seen even with modest levels of activity, such as walking briskly or bicycling 30 minutes a day on most days of the week.
- Health benefits increase as levels of activity increase.
- Physical activity improves health even when it does not result in weight loss.
- For information on increasing physical activity, visit www.walkny.org, www.nysphysicalactivity.org, and www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/index.htm.

✓ Maintain a healthy diet and decrease calories:

- Eating fruits and vegetables every day—at least 2 servings of fruit and 3 servings of vegetables—can improve health and reduce the risk of cancer, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and other diseases.
- Eating less fast food and preparing smaller, healthier meals at home can result in gradual, sustained weight loss.
- Learn more about dietary recommendations at: www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/ and www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/pubs/choose.htm.

Obese New Yorkers should discuss possible treatment options with their doctor.

A report from the New York City Community Health Survey



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NYC Vital Signs features information on critical aspects of public health in New York City.
To contact NYC Vital Signs, e-mail survey@health.nyc.gov.

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