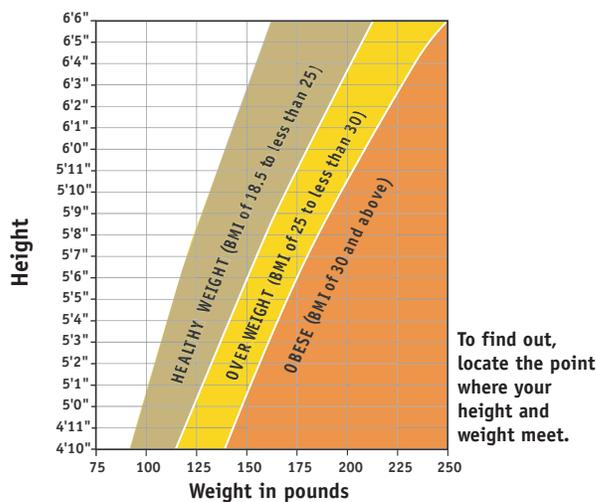


Obesity and Health: Risks and Behaviors

Obesity is a major health problem in New York City. More than half of adult New Yorkers (53%) are overweight or obese and only 44% are at a healthy weight. In this report, “overweight” and “obese” are defined by a person’s body mass index (BMI), which is based on a person’s weight, adjusted for height. Being obese (BMI 30 or greater) or overweight (BMI 25 or greater, but less than 30) presents a major risk to health and deserves the close attention of New Yorkers, health care providers, community groups and health educators. Having an unhealthy weight increases the risk of many conditions, including diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, cancer, and heart disease.

What is your weight status? (ages 20 and older)



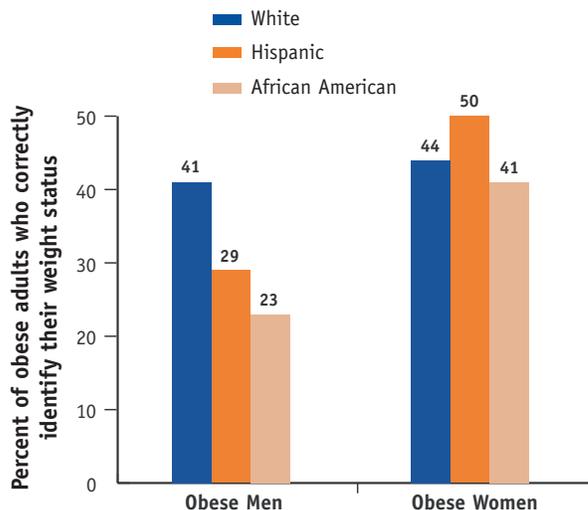
Adapted from *Eat, Drink and Be Healthy: The Harvard Medical School Guide to Healthy Eating* (2002)

Most obese people underestimate their weight

- About 1 in 5 New Yorkers (around 1 million people) is obese.
- When asked how overweight they are, only 39% of obese New Yorkers say “very overweight.”
- Among obese men, white New Yorkers are almost twice as likely as black New Yorkers to correctly identify themselves as “very overweight.”
- Among obese black and Hispanic New Yorkers, women are more likely than men to correctly identify themselves as “very overweight.”

Knowing your weight status can help you know if you should reduce your current weight.

Less than half of obese adults correctly identify their weight status



Obese New Yorkers report poorer health than other New Yorkers

- Overweight and obese New Yorkers are more likely to describe their health as “fair” or “poor” than those of healthy weight.
- Diabetes is 3 times more common among obese New Yorkers than among those of healthy weight; diabetes is also more common among overweight New Yorkers, compared to those of healthy weight.
- New Yorkers who are overweight or obese are more likely to have high blood pressure and high cholesterol than those of healthy weight. For example, obese New Yorkers are more than twice as likely to have high blood pressure than those of healthy weight.
- Obese New Yorkers are more likely to report emotional distress than those of healthy weight.

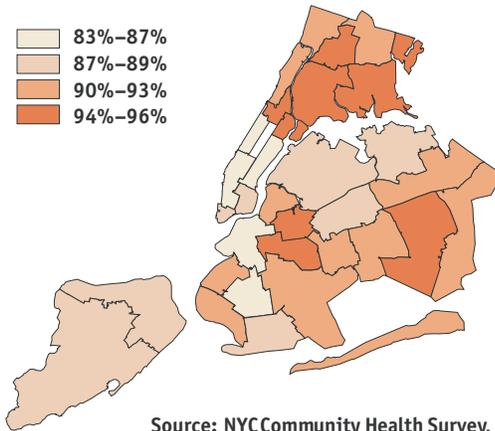
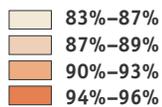
| | % of Healthy Weight Adults | % of Overweight Adults | % of Obese Adults |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Fair or poor health | 16 | 19 | 28 |
| Diabetes | 5 | 9 | 16 |
| High blood pressure* | 18 | 27 | 41 |
| High cholesterol* | 28 | 35 | 39 |
| Emotional distress | 5 | 5 | 8 |

* among those tested

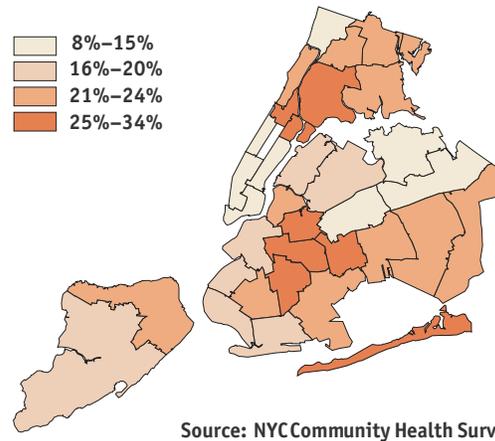
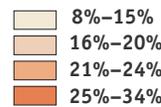
Obesity is related to many other serious health problems.

Neighborhoods that report more unhealthy eating habits have higher levels of obesity

Percent of New Yorkers who do not eat at least 5 fruits and/or vegetables per day



Percent of New Yorkers who are obese



- Most New Yorkers (91%) do not eat the recommended servings of at least 5 fruits and/or vegetables per day.
- Five areas with the highest proportions of residents who do not eat at least 5 fruits and/or vegetables per day also have the highest rates of obesity: Williamsburg/Bushwick, Bedford-Stuyvesant/Crown Heights, East Harlem, Central Harlem/Morningside Heights, and the South Bronx.

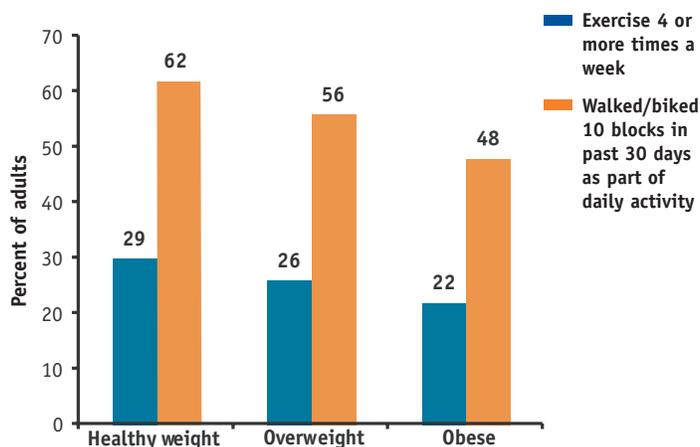
- The Upper East Side/Gramercy neighborhood, where a high proportion of people eat at least 5 fruits and/or vegetables per day, has the lowest prevalence of obesity.
- Obesity is associated with poverty. In neighborhoods with high levels of obesity, a high proportion (more than one third) of the population lives in poverty; in the areas with little obesity, relatively few people are poor. These patterns may, in part, be due to less access to healthy food options and safe space for physical activity in poor neighborhoods.

Overweight and obese New Yorkers report less physical activity

- Only 26% of New Yorkers engage in physical activity at least 30 minutes/day, 4 times/week.
- Obese New Yorkers are less likely to exercise regularly than those who are of healthy weight.
- Walking or biking 10 blocks is common in NYC (57%), but least common among obese New Yorkers.

Regular physical activity is important to maintain or reduce weight. Exercise improves health even if you don't lose weight.

Weight status and physical activity

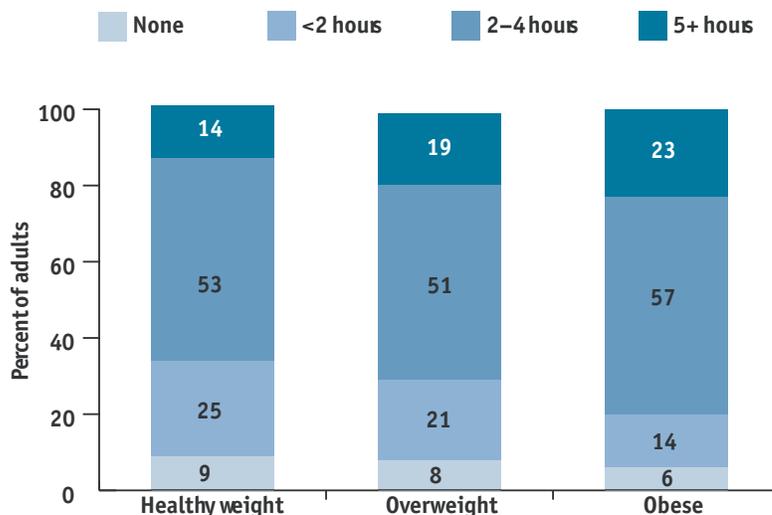


Overweight and obese New Yorkers watch the most TV

- Obesity is related to sedentary activities, such as watching TV.
- Obese New Yorkers are almost twice as likely as those of healthy weight to watch 5 or more hours of television per day (23% vs. 14%).

Replacing TV watching with physical activity can prevent weight gain.

Weight status and daily hours of TV



Recommendations

✓ Know your status.

- Knowing your weight is the first step in reducing health risks.
 - An average woman (5'4" tall) should aim for a weight between 108 to 145 pounds and an average man (5'8" tall) should aim for a weight between 122 to 164 pounds.
 - See the chart on the first page, and for more information, visit: <http://nhlbisupport.com/bmi/bmicalc.htm>.

✓ Reduce your risk.

- Even a little more physical activity can help you reach a healthier weight. Work your way up to 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week. It will greatly improve your health, even if your weight doesn't go down! For more information, visit: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/index.htm.
 - Take the stairs instead of the elevator and get off the subway or bus one stop early.
 - Walking is excellent exercise—try replacing some TV time with a walk.
- A healthy diet today has many health benefits, even if you don't lose weight. Learn more at: www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines.
 - Eat smaller portions. Bring your own lunch. Keep healthy snacks, such as fruits and vegetables, with you to fight off sugary temptations.
 - Trade sugar-full sodas and juices for water or sugar-free drinks.
 - Don't eat in front of the TV.
- Talk to your health care provider about your weight, your diet, and your physical activity.
 - Have your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar checked periodically, as recommended.
- **BEAT** diabetes. Obesity can lead to diabetes and make it harder to control. If you have diabetes
 - Be physically active
 - Eat a healthy diet (increase fruits, vegetables and fiber, decrease saturated and trans fats)
 - **ABC'S** (know and control **A**1C, **B**lood Pressure and **C**holesterol, and **S**top Smoking)
 - Take your medicine

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 vitalsigns@health.nyc.gov.

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