

BRFSS Brief

Number 2022-08

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an annual telephone survey of adults developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and several US Territories. The New York BRFSS is administered by the New York State Department of Health to provide statewide and regional information on behaviors, risk factors, and use of preventive health services related to the leading causes of chronic and infectious diseases, disability, injury, and death.

Overweight and Obesity

New York State Adults, 2020

Introduction and Key Findings

Obesity is a significant public health epidemic, a complex disease with multifactorial etiology, and a leading cause of preventable death in the United States, second only to smoking.¹ Obesity increases the risk of many diseases for adults, including type 2 diabetes; high blood pressure; heart, liver, kidney, and gallbladder diseases; stroke; arthritis; depression; sleep apnea; pregnancy complications; and many types of cancer. Obesity is also associated with an increased risk of overall mortality.²⁻¹² Increasingly, these conditions are being seen in children and adolescents with obesity who are also at greater risk for certain diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and depression.¹³⁻¹⁶ Obesity is also associated with impaired immune function,^{17,18} decreased lung capacity,¹⁹ increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 potentially tripling the risk of hospitalization due to a COVID-19 infection, and as body mass index (BMI) increases, the risk of death from COVID-19 increases.^{20,21} Obesity also disproportionately impacts specific racial and ethnic minority groups, including Hispanic and Black non-Hispanic adults who have higher prevalence of obesity²² and are more likely to experience worse outcomes from COVID-19.²³⁻²⁷

Creating community environments, policies, and systems that support healthy food and beverage choices and safe and accessible physical activity opportunities, while also increasing efforts to reduce health disparities and inequities, is a major goal in the effort to prevent and reduce the burden of chronic diseases as part of the New York State Prevention Agenda 2019-2024. Maintaining healthy weight should start in early childhood and continue throughout adulthood.

Key Findings

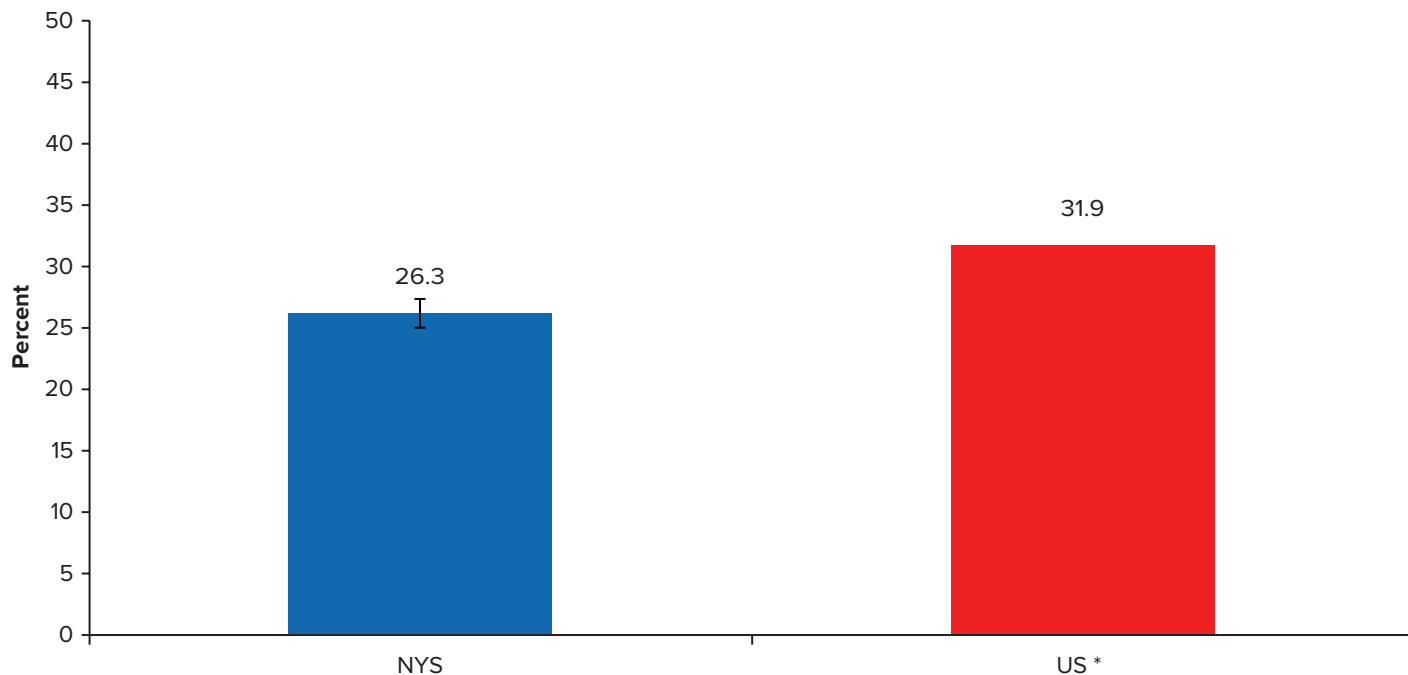
More than one-quarter (26.3%) of adults in New York State (NYS) have obesity and another 37% have overweight; these two conditions affect over 8.2 million people in NYS. The prevalence of obesity in NYS is higher among adults who are Black non-Hispanic (35.1%) and Hispanic (30.4%), currently living with disability (34.7%), and living in the region outside of New York City (28.3%). Obesity is less prevalent among adults aged 18-24 years (16.7%) and among adults with a college degree (19.9%).

BRFSS questions

1. About how much do you weigh without shoes?
2. About how tall are you without shoes?

Weight and height responses were used to determine body mass index (BMI), calculated as weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters. Respondents were classified as overweight if their BMI was equal to or greater than 25.0, but less than 30.0. They were classified as obese if their BMI was 30.0 or greater.

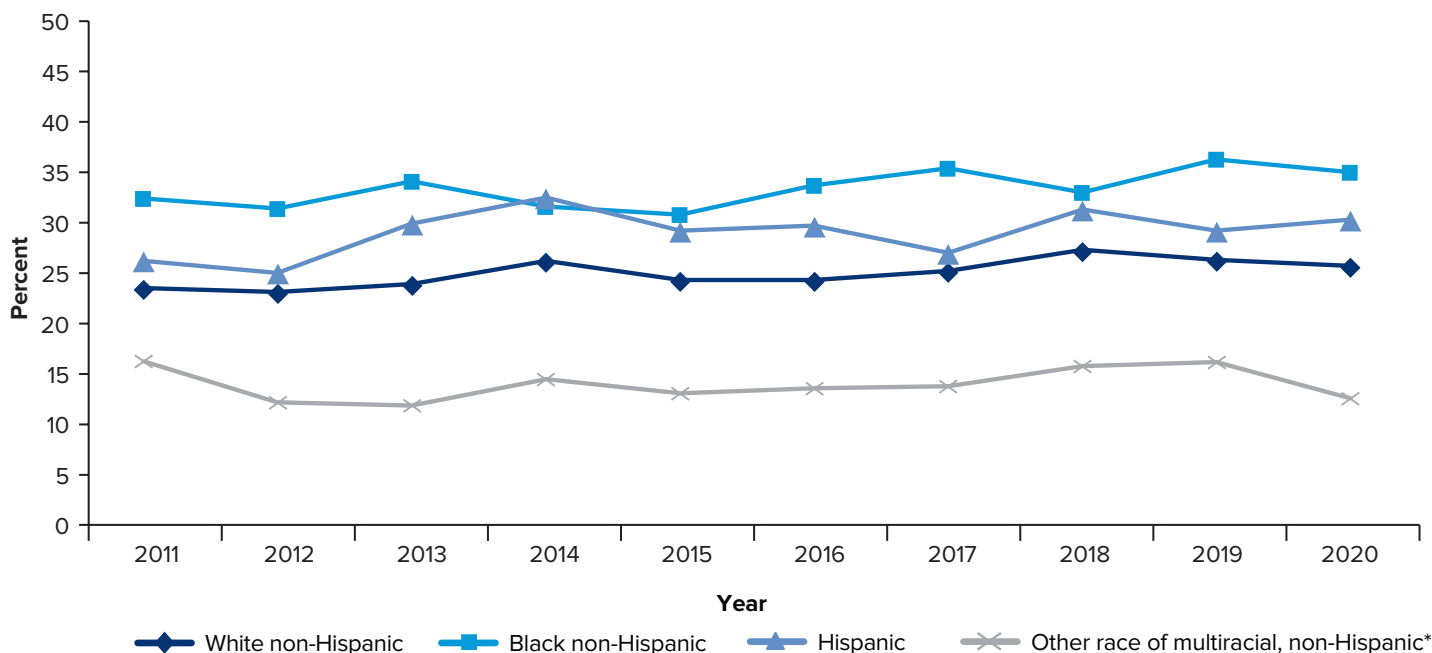
Figure 1. Obesity among US and New York State adults, BRFSS 2020



*Median percent; includes data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia (n=51)

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 2. Racial and ethnic disparities in NYS adult obesity, BRFSS 2011-2020



*Includes American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, other race or multiracial

Overweight and obesity^a among New York State adults, 2020 BRFSS

	Neither overweight nor obese		Overweight ^b		Obese ^c	
	% ^d	95% CI ^d	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
New York State (NYS) [n=14,769]	36.7	35.5 - 37.9	37.0	35.8 - 38.2	26.3	25.3 - 27.4
Sex						
Male	30.3	28.7 - 31.9	43.3	41.6 - 45.1	26.4	24.8 - 27.9
Female	43.1	41.4 - 44.8	30.6	29.0 - 32.2	26.3	24.8 - 27.8
Age (years)						
18-24	56.1	51.7 - 60.5	27.2	23.2 - 31.2	16.7	13.5 - 19.8
25-34	43.3	40.1 - 46.5	31.7	28.6 - 34.8	25.0	21.9 - 28.0
35-44	31.0	28.2 - 33.8	39.0	35.9 - 42.1	30.0	27.2 - 32.9
45-54	28.9	26.1 - 31.7	38.9	35.9 - 41.9	32.2	29.4 - 35.0
55-64	28.9	26.2 - 31.6	40.8	38.1 - 43.5	30.2	27.8 - 32.7
65+	36.0	33.7 - 38.2	40.4	38.1 - 42.7	23.6	21.7 - 25.6
Race/ethnicity						
White non-Hispanic	36.5	35.1 - 37.9	37.7	36.3 - 39.2	25.8	24.5 - 27.1
Black non-Hispanic	28.9	25.5 - 32.3	36.0	32.4 - 39.6	35.1	31.5 - 38.6
Hispanic	31.1	28.1 - 34.0	38.5	35.4 - 41.7	30.4	27.3 - 33.4
Other race or multiracial, non-Hispanic ^e	55.4	51.0 - 59.8	31.9	27.8 - 36.0	12.6	10.1 - 15.2
Income						
<\$25,000	36.6	33.7 - 39.5	33.8	31.0 - 36.5	29.7	27.0 - 32.3
\$25,000-\$49,999	34.2	31.3 - 37.1	37.8	34.8 - 40.8	28.0	25.4 - 30.5
\$50,000 and greater	36.0	34.3 - 37.7	39.0	37.3 - 40.7	25.1	23.6 - 26.6
Missing ^f	40.4	37.5 - 43.4	35.1	32.2 - 38.0	24.5	21.8 - 27.2
Educational attainment						
Less than high school (HS)	29.0	25.0 - 32.9	38.7	34.3 - 43.0	32.4	28.4 - 36.4
High school or GED	32.8	30.4 - 35.2	37.6	35.2 - 40.1	29.5	27.3 - 31.8
Some post-HS	35.7	33.3 - 38.1	35.8	33.5 - 38.2	28.5	26.3 - 30.7
College graduate	42.9	41.2 - 44.6	37.2	35.5 - 38.8	19.9	18.6 - 21.2
Disability^g						
Yes	33.0	30.4 - 35.5	32.4	29.9 - 34.8	34.7	32.2 - 37.1
No	37.8	36.4 - 39.2	38.4	37.1 - 39.8	23.7	22.5 - 25.0
Region						
New York City (NYC)	40.5	38.5 - 42.5	35.8	33.9 - 37.8	23.7	22.0 - 25.3
NYS exclusive of NYC	33.8	32.3 - 35.3	37.9	36.4 - 39.4	28.3	26.9 - 29.7

a Based on categories of body mass index (BMI), calculated as weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters

b Overweight, 25.0≤BMI<30.0

c Obese, BMI≥30.0

d % = weighted percentage; CI = confidence interval.

e American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, other race or multiracial

f "Missing" category included because more than 10% of the sample did not report income.

g All respondents who reported having at least one type of disability (cognitive, mobility, vision, self-care, independent living or deafness)

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Program Contributions

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