

BRFSS Brief

Number 1910

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an annual statewide telephone survey of adults developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by the New York State Department of Health. The BRFSS is designed to provide information on behaviors, risk factors, and utilization of preventive services related to the leading causes of chronic and infectious diseases, disability, injury, and death among the noninstitutionalized, civilian population aged 18 years and older.

High Cholesterol

New York State Adults, 2017

Introduction and Key Findings

Nearly 1 in 3 Americans has high blood cholesterol, a condition where the blood contains too many lipids.¹ Elevated blood cholesterol levels are a major modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease (CVD), including heart attack and stroke. Lowering elevated blood cholesterol through proven lifestyle changes and/or cholesterol-lowering medications can reduce the risk for CVD. Lifestyle modification activities which include adhering to a heart healthy diet, getting regular exercise, avoiding all tobacco products, and maintaining a healthy weight are critical to health promotion and cardiovascular risk reduction.²

Blood cholesterol goals are now based on an individual's risk factors for CVD. In addition to high cholesterol, other modifiable risk factors for CVD include uncontrolled hypertension, diabetes, physical inactivity, smoking, being overweight or obese, and drinking alcohol in excess. Non-modifiable risk factors include race and ethnicity, family history of high cholesterol and early onset of CVD, and increased age. Working with a health care provider to identify risk factors, getting cholesterol levels checked and developing a personalized plan to lower risk are key steps to preventing CVD.^{2,3}

Key Findings

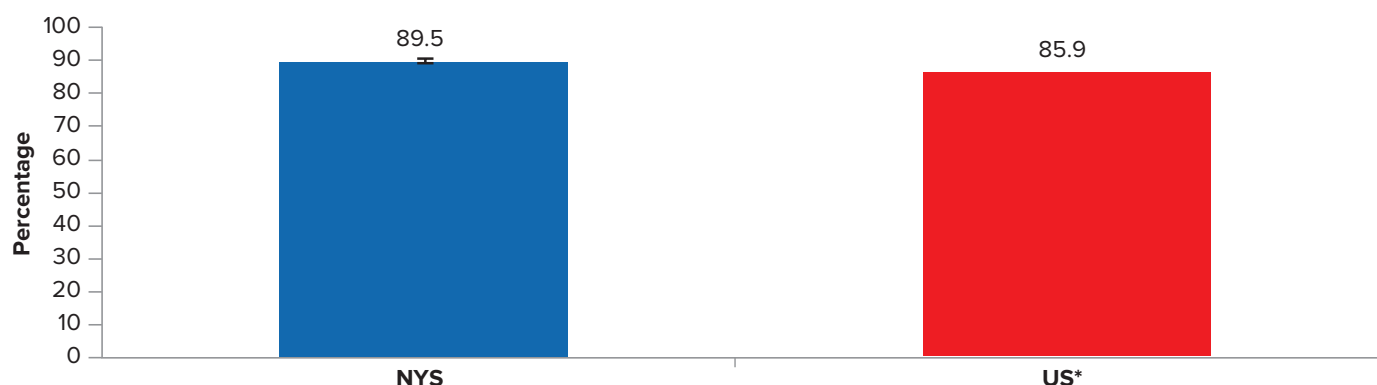
Over 4.5 million adults in New York State report being told by a health professional they have high cholesterol levels (32.6%). High cholesterol is significantly more prevalent among adults who are obese (40.7%) or overweight (37.1%) than those who are neither overweight nor obese (24.2%). Adults with diabetes have a significantly higher rate (60.8%) of elevated cholesterol compared to adults without diabetes (28.9%).

About ninety percent of NYS adults reported that they had had their cholesterol checked within the past five years. Rates for having cholesterol checked within the past five years were highest among adults over 65 years of age (97.2%), African Americans (92.9%), adults with annual household income \$50,000 and greater (92.3%), adults with Medicare (95.9%), and adults living with diabetes (98.4%).

BRFSS questions

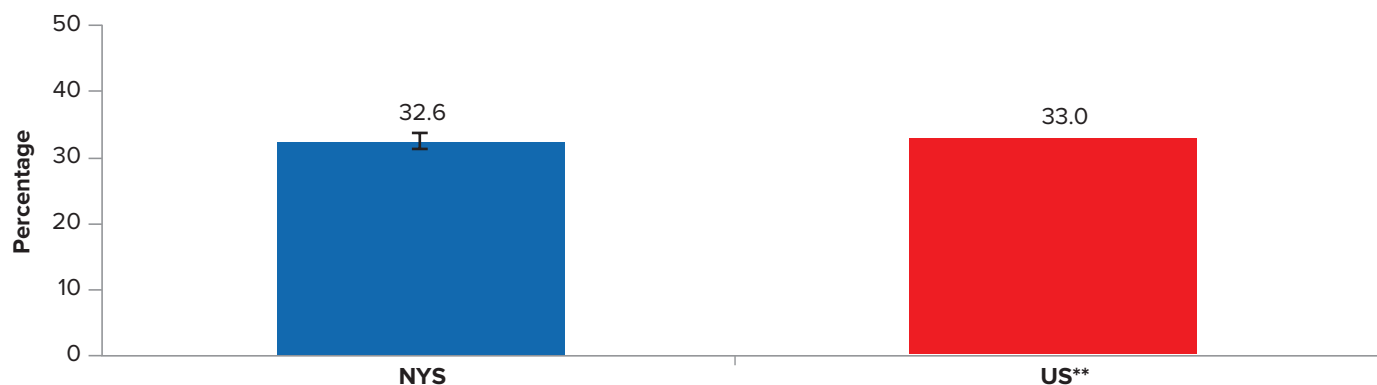
1. Blood cholesterol is a fatty substance found in the blood. About how long has it been since you last had your blood cholesterol checked?
2. Have you ever been told by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional that your blood cholesterol is high?

Figure 1. Cholesterol checked within the past 5 years among U.S. and New York State adults, BRFSS 2017



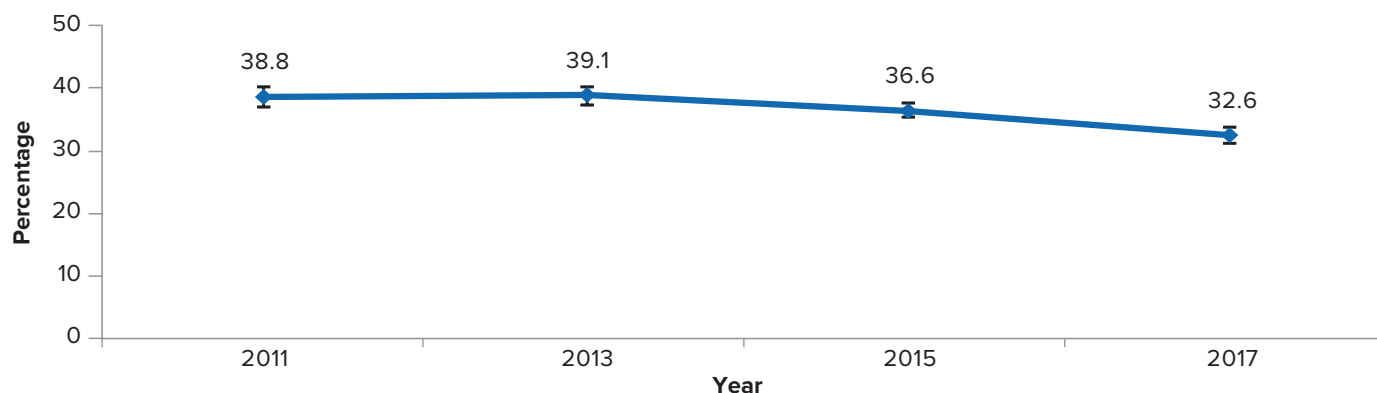
* Median percent; includes data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
 Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 2. High cholesterol* among U.S. and New York State adults, BRFSS 2017



* Those respondents who were ever told by a doctor, nurse or other health professional that their blood cholesterol was high.
 ** Median percent; includes data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
 Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 3. High cholesterol* among New York State adults, by BRFSS survey year



* Those respondents who were ever told by a doctor, nurse or other health professional that their blood cholesterol was high.
 Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Blood cholesterol among New York State adults, 2017 BRFSS

	Blood cholesterol			
	High cholesterol ^a		Checked within past 5 years	
	% ^b	95% CI ^b	%	95% CI
Total New York State (NYS) n=12249	32.6	31.4-33.8	89.5	88.6-90.3
Sex				
Male	34.3	32.5-36.0	87.7	86.4-89.0
Female	31.1	29.5-32.7	91.1	90.0-92.1
Age (years)				
18-24	10.7	7.5-13.9	76.2	72.1-80.4
25-34	13.8	11.1-16.5	82.0	79.5-84.5
35-44	19.7	17.1-22.3	86.6	84.3-88.9
45-54	37.9	34.9-40.8	93.0	91.7-94.3
55-64	45.9	43.0-48.7	95.4	94.3-96.6
65+	50.0	47.6-52.4	97.2	96.4-97.9
Race/ethnicity				
White non-Hispanic	34.0	32.5-35.5	89.9	88.8-91.0
Black non-Hispanic	32.0	28.6-35.4	92.9	91.1-94.7
Hispanic	32.8	29.9-35.7	85.8	83.6-88.1
Other non-Hispanic	25.3	21.0-29.6	89.9	87.2-92.6
Annual household income				
<\$25,000	36.0	33.4-38.6	87.4	85.6-89.2
\$25,000-\$49,999	33.7	30.8-36.5	87.1	84.8-89.3
\$50,000 and greater	30.7	29.0-32.4	92.3	91.2-93.4
Missing ^c	33.0	29.5-36.4	87.7	85.3-90.1
Educational attainment				
Less than high school (HS)	41.5	37.5-45.6	83.4	80.4-86.4
High school or GED	32.4	29.9-34.8	89.3	87.6-90.9
Some college	32.0	29.6-34.4	90.0	88.3-91.7
College graduate	30.0	28.3-31.6	91.9	90.9-93.0
Disability^d				
Yes	45.4	42.6-48.1	90.9	89.0-92.7
No	29.2	27.9-30.5	89.4	88.4-90.4
Have health care coverage				
Private	30.2	28.4-32.0	92.2	91.1-93.3
Medicare	49.5	46.6-52.4	95.9	94.6-97.2
Medicaid	33.4	29.6-37.2	89.0	86.2-91.7
Other insurances ^e	32.2	25.9-38.5	91.5	88.1-95.0
No coverage	24.2	20.4-27.9	72.1	68.2-75.9
Weight status				
Neither overweight nor obese	24.2	22.3-26.1	87.4	85.9-89.0
Overweight	37.1	35.0-39.2	90.2	88.8-91.6
Obese	40.7	38.2-43.2	93.6	92.3-94.9
Diabetes				
Yes	60.8	57.2-64.4	98.4	97.6-99.2
No	28.9	27.7-30.1	88.4	87.5-89.3
Region				
New York City (NYC)	31.3	29.4-33.2	90.8	89.7-91.9
NYS exclusive of NYC	33.6	32.1-35.1	88.4	87.2-89.6

^a Those respondents who were ever told by a doctor, nurse or other health professional that their blood cholesterol was high.

^b % = weighted percentage; CI = confidence interval.

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

^d All respondents who reported at least one type of disability (cognitive, self-care, independent living, vision, or mobility).

^e Includes TRICARE, VA/Military, and Indian Health Services.

References

1. Benjamin EJ, Blaha MJ, Chiuve SE, Cushman M, Das SR, Deo R, et al. Heart disease and stroke statistics—2017 update: a report from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2017; 135:e1–e458.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Cholesterol: Preventing and Managing High Cholesterol. Updated January 18, 2019. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/cholesterol/index.htm>
3. Stone NS, et al. 2013 ACC/AHA Guideline on the Treatment of Blood Cholesterol to Reduce Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Risk in Adults: A Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines. *Circulation*. 2014; 129:S1-S45.

Program Contributions

New York State Department of Health
Bureau of Chronic Disease Evaluation and Research
Bureau of Community Chronic Disease Prevention

Order Information

Copies may be obtained by contacting:

BRFSS Coordinator
New York State Department of Health
Bureau of Chronic Disease Evaluation
and Research
Empire State Plaza
Corning Tower, Rm. 1070
Albany, NY 12237-0679

Or by phone or electronic mail:

(518) 473-0673
or
BRFSS@health.ny.gov
or
www.health.ny.gov



Department
of Health