

BRFSS Brief

Number 2021-19

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.

Physical Activity

New York State Adults, 2019

Introduction and Key Findings

Participating in regular physical activity (PA) benefits children, adults, and older adults of diverse lived experiences. Regular PA reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, colon and breast cancer, and the risk of premature death.¹ Regular PA promotes many aspects of wellbeing by aiding weight loss, preventing weight gain, strengthening muscles and bones, relieving arthritis pain, and improving mental and brain health, and sleep function.¹

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an overall decrease in PA and an increase in sedentary behavior among people with and without medical conditions.² Among adults infected with COVID-19, meeting PA Guidelines or participating in some level of physical activity was strongly associated with a reduced risk for hospitalization and death.³

The 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults participate in moderate-intensity aerobic physical activities for at least 150 minutes per week, vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activities for at least 75 minutes per week, or an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activities. Adults should also participate in muscle strengthening activities on two or more days per week.⁴ The New York State Prevention Agenda 2019-2024 established a goal to increase participation in leisure-time physical activity (LTPA) to 77.4% among all adults, 58.7% among adults with less than a high school education, and 60.6% among adults with disability.⁵

Key Findings

Most adults (72.8%) in New York State (NYS) participate in regular leisure-time physical activity (LTPA). Participation in LTPA is higher among males (75.1%), those who earn an annual household income of \$50,000 or more (82.7%), and those with more education (college graduates 83.6%). Regular participation in LTPA is lower among Hispanics (62.6%) and non-Hispanic blacks (67.1%), those with less than a high school education (54.4%), and those living with disability (59.4%). Significant improvement is needed to meet NYS's Prevention Agenda goal of increasing adult participation in LTPA.

Over one third of NYS adults (39.4%) were estimated to have met the recommendations for aerobic activity or for muscle strengthening activity. Less than one-quarter (24.1%) of adults met both the aerobic and muscle strengthening guidelines. The prevalence of adults who met both the aerobic and muscle strengthening guidelines is higher among adults who are male (25.9%), earn \$50,000 or more (28.5%), have a college degree (29.5%), and are living without disability (25.8%).

BRFSS questions

Leisure-time physical activity

1. During the past month, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise?

Aerobic activity (repeated)

1. What type of physical activity or exercise did you spend the most time doing during the past month?
2. How many times per week or per month did you take part in this activity during the past month?
3. And when you took part in this activity, for how many minutes or hours did you usually keep at it?

Muscle strengthening activity

During the past month, how many times per week or per month did you do physical activities or exercises to STRENGTHEN your muscles? Do NOT count aerobic activities like walking, running, or bicycling. Count activities using your own body weight like yoga, sit-ups or push-ups and those using weight machines, free weights, or elastic bands.

Figure 1. Any leisure-time physical activity* among New York State and US adults, BRFSS 2019

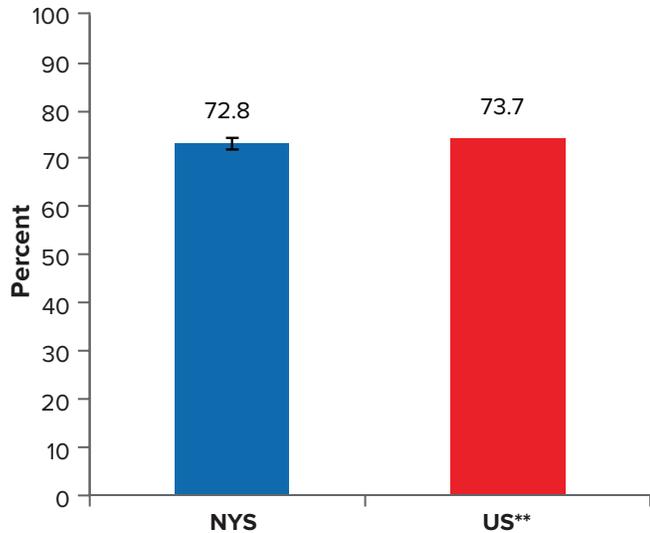
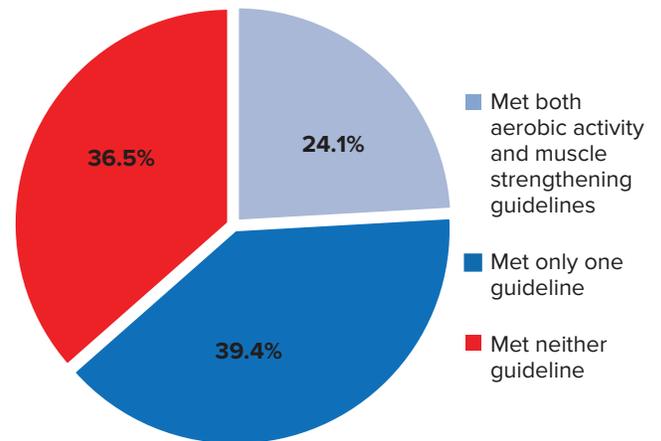


Figure 2. Adequate physical activity* among New York State adults, BRFSS 2019



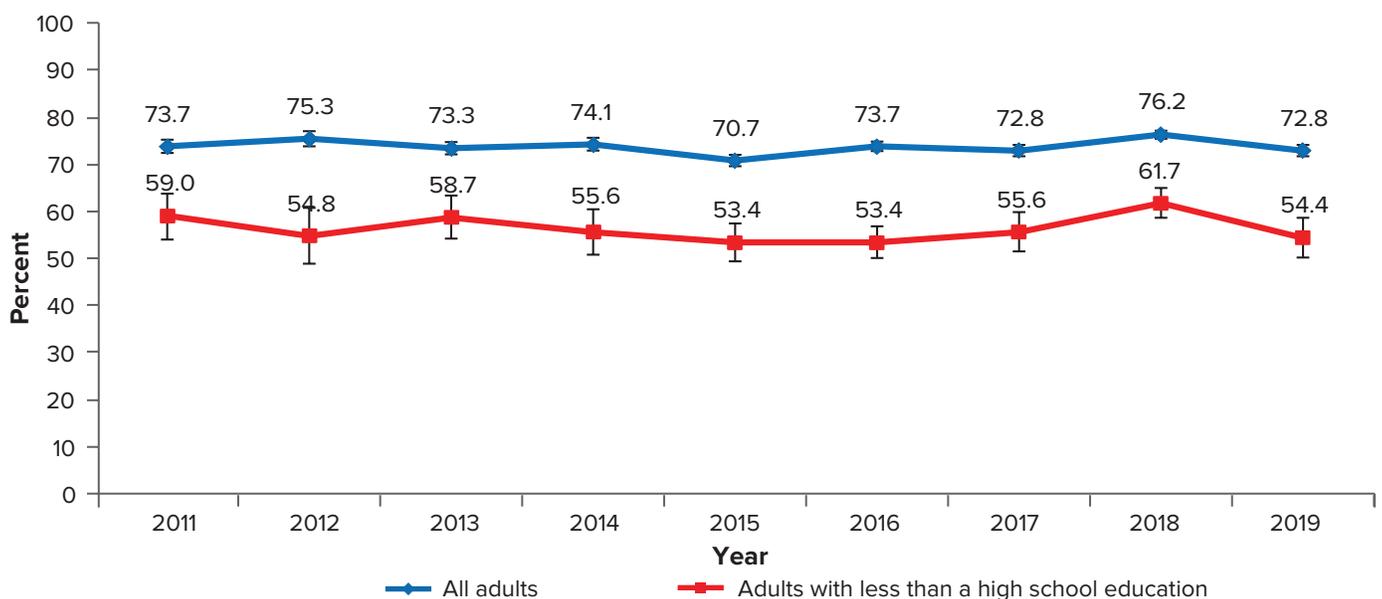
* Other than your regular job, participation during the past month in any physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise.

** Median percent; includes data from 49 states and the District of Columbia

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

* Among all adults, the proportion who reported that they do either physical activity for at least 150 minutes per week, vigorous physical activity for at least 75 minutes per week, or an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous physical activity and also participate in muscle strengthening activity on two or more days per week.

Figure 3. Any leisure-time physical activity* among New York State adults, by BRFSS survey year



* Other than your regular job, participation during the past month in any physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise.

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Participation in levels of physical activity among New York State adults, 2019 BRFSS

	Adequate Physical Activity							
	LTPA ^a		Aerobic ^b		Muscle Strength ^c		Aerobic and Muscle Strength ^d	
	% ^e	95% CI ^e	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Total New York State (NYS) [n=14,232]	72.8	71.6-73.9	50.2	48.8-51.5	37.9	36.6-39.1	24.1	23.0-25.2
Sex								
Male	75.1	73.5-76.8	52.5	50.6-54.5	42.5	40.7-44.4	25.9	24.2-27.6
Female	70.6	69.0-72.2	47.9	46.1-49.8	33.5	31.9-35.2	22.4	20.9-24.0
Age (years)								
18-24	79.6	75.9-83.3	50.8	46.1-55.5	45.6	40.9-50.3	23.9	20.0-27.8
25-34	75.9	73.0-78.9	47.7	44.3-51.1	41.4	38.0-44.8	26.2	23.1-29.3
35-44	70.8	67.5-74.0	47.8	44.2-51.4	34.8	31.4-38.2	22.5	19.5-25.5
45-54	73	70.2-75.8	48.8	45.7-51.9	35.7	32.7-38.6	23.5	20.8-26.2
55-64	72.9	70.4-75.4	55.8	52.9-58.7	36.5	33.7-39.2	24.3	21.8-26.7
65+	67.4	65.2-69.5	51.8	49.5-54.1	35.2	33.1-37.4	24.6	22.7-26.6
Race/ethnicity								
White non-Hispanic	77.2	76.0-78.5	55.4	53.9-57.0	38.9	37.4-40.5	25.9	24.6-27.3
Black non-Hispanic	67.1	63.6-70.7	44.5	40.5-48.5	39.3	35.4-43.1	25.7	21.9-29.4
Hispanic	62.6	59.4-65.8	41.6	38.4-44.9	32.8	29.7-35.9	20.8	18.1-23.5
Other non-Hispanic	74.5	70.1-78.9	46.7	41.5-51.9	38.7	33.9-43.5	19	15.4-22.6
Annual household income								
<\$25,000	62.2	59.5-64.9	40.4	37.5-43.3	33.8	31.1-36.6	19.6	17.2-22.0
\$25,000-\$49,999	67.3	64.3-70.3	47.2	44.0-50.5	36.2	33.1-39.3	23.5	20.8-26.3
\$50,000 and greater	82.7	81.2-84.2	59.6	57.6-61.5	41.1	39.2-43.0	28.5	26.7-30.2
Missing ^f	67.1	64.3-69.8	42.5	39.5-45.6	36.4	33.5-39.3	19.5	17.0-22.0
Educational attainment								
Less than high school (HS)	54.4	50.2-58.6	33.8	29.5-38.0	30.3	26.4-34.3	15	11.9-18.1
High school or GED	66.1	63.7-68.5	46.4	43.7-49.1	36.8	34.2-39.5	22.3	19.9-24.7
Some college	75	72.8-77.1	50.8	48.2-53.4	36.2	33.8-38.7	23.5	21.3-25.7
College graduate	83.6	82.2-85.0	59.4	57.5-61.4	42.9	41.0-44.8	29.5	27.8-31.3
Disability^g								
Yes	59.4	57.0-61.8	39.4	36.9-41.9	32.8	30.5-35.2	18.9	16.9-21.0
No	77.4	76.1-78.7	53.9	52.4-55.5	39.6	38.1-41.1	25.8	24.5-27.2
Weight status								
Neither overweight nor obese	77.5	75.5-79.4	55.1	52.7-57.4	42.7	40.4-45.0	28.5	26.4-30.5
Overweight	76	74.1-77.8	52.6	50.3-54.9	39.9	37.7-42.2	25.3	23.3-27.3
Obese	65	62.7-67.4	43.9	41.5-46.4	31	28.7-33.3	19	17.0-21.0
Region								
New York City (NYC)	70.6	68.5-72.6	48.4	46.1-50.7	37.4	35.3-39.6	23.8	21.9-25.7
NYS exclusive of NYC	74.4	73.1-75.7	51.5	49.9-53.0	38.2	36.7-39.7	24.3	23.0-25.7

a LTPA = Leisure-time physical activity during the past month.

b Prevalence of respondents who report engaging in at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity.

c Prevalence of respondents who report participating in muscle-strengthening physical activity at least 2 times per week.

d Met both the aerobic and muscle strengthening guidelines.

e %=weighted percentage; CI= Confidence Interval

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, or independent living or deafness)

References

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https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf
2. Stockwell S, Trott M, Tully M, et al. Changes in physical activity and sedentary behaviours from before to during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown: a systematic review. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine* 2021;7:e000960. doi: 10.1136/bmjsem-2020-000960.
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4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2018.
https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf
5. New York State Prevention Agenda Preventing Chronic Diseases Action Plan available at:
https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/prevention_agenda/2019-2024/chr.htm#FA2

Program Contributions

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

Order Information

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