



NYS BRFSS Brief

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 (NYS) Department of Health (DOH) 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, 2021

Introduction

The causes of obesity are complex and include eating patterns, physical activity levels, sleep routines, genetics, certain medical conditions, and medications. Economic stability, access to quality education, the availability of nutritious foods, and opportunities for physical activity also influence the risk of obesity.¹ Obesity prevalence is highest among Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Hispanic adults and adults without a high school degree or equivalent.² These groups experience persistent disparities in obesity caused by systemic and institutional barriers, such as lack of access to healthy, affordable foods and beverages, safe and convenient places for physical activity, and healthcare services.³ Addressing obesity is important because it is associated with a range of diseases, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, arthritis, sleep apnea, some cancers, and increased risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19.^{3,4} Obesity is estimated to cost approximately \$173 billion dollars in national health care expenses each year.⁵

Health Equity

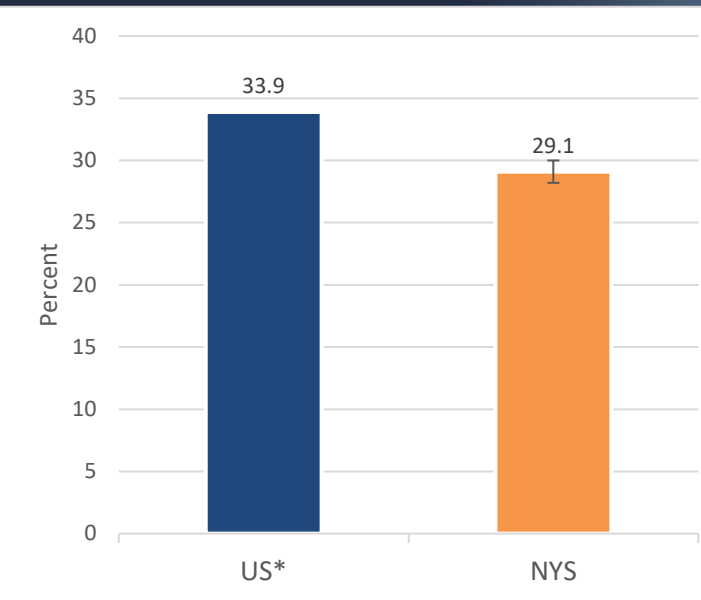
Disparities in obesity underscore the need to address social determinants of health, the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, to remove barriers to health. To advance health equity and reduce the burden of chronic disease in New York State (NYS), strategies to address overweight and obesity should focus on improving the conditions, and set of forces and systems shaping conditions, for groups experiencing the greatest disparities in obesity.⁷ 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 [NYS Prevention Agenda 2019-2024](#).



Key Findings

- Approximately 2 out of every 3 adult New Yorkers have either obese (29.1%) or overweight (34.5%) BMI status. These two conditions affect over 8.4 million adults in NYS.
- Racial and ethnic disparities in the prevalence of obesity persist. The prevalence of obesity is higher among adults who are Black, non-Hispanic (36.8%) and adults who are Hispanic (33.5%).
- Obesity is more prevalent in adults currently living with a disability (38.1%), adults living in rural areas (35.9%), and adults living outside of New York City (31.6%).
- Obesity is less prevalent among adults aged 18-24 years (20.8%), adults with a college degree (22.8%), and adults with a household income greater than \$50,000 per year (27.3%).

Figure 1. Obesity among US and NYS adults, BRFSS 2021



*Median percent; includes data from 49 states (excluding FL) and the District of Columbia (n=50)

Figure 2. Weight Status of NYS Adults, BRFSS 2021 (in percentages)

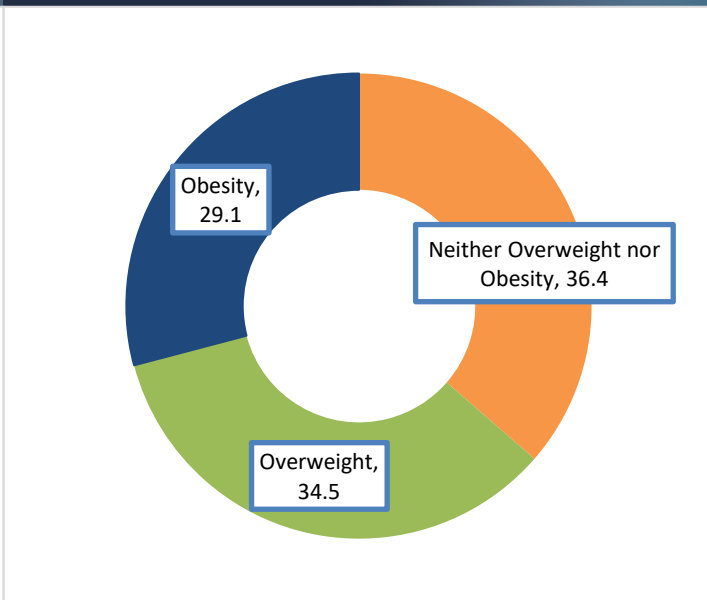
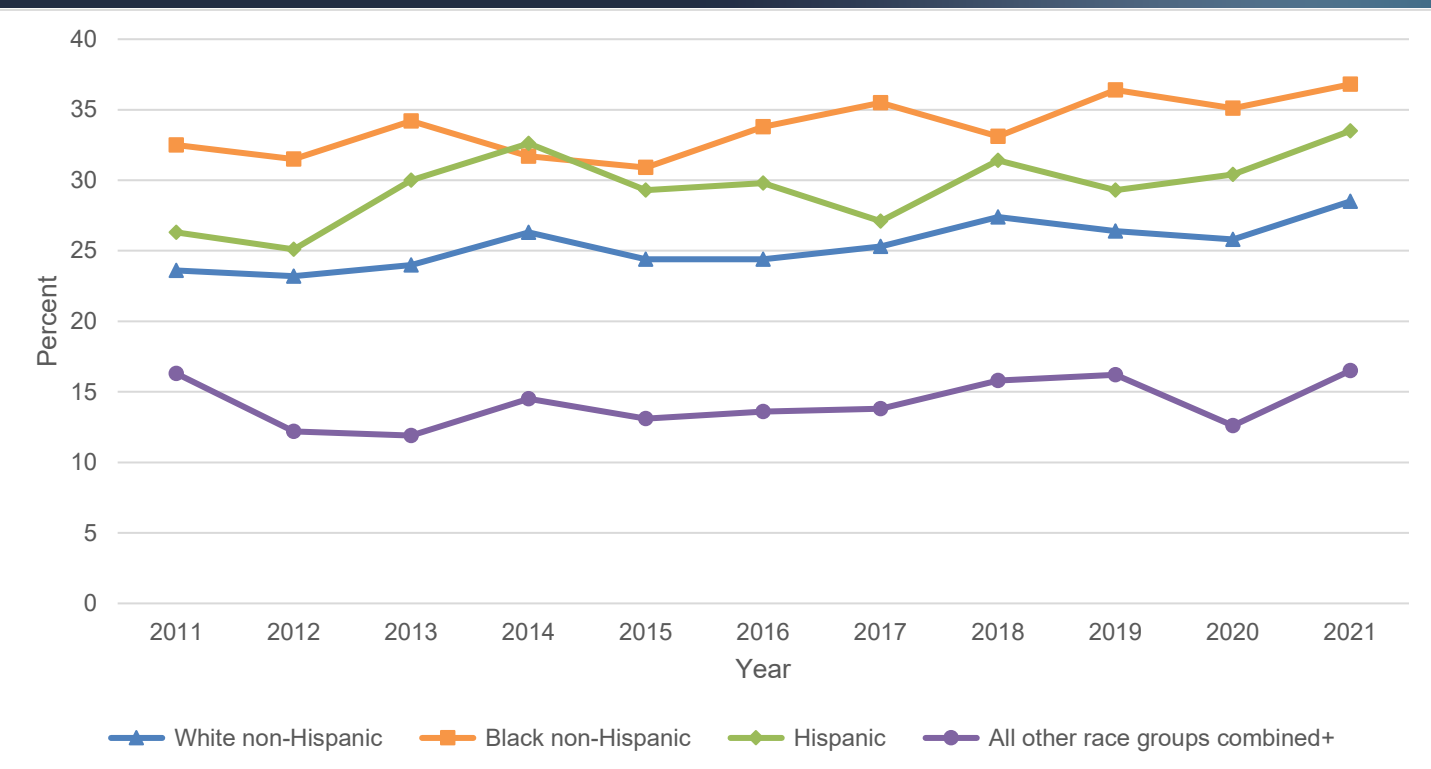


Figure 3. Racial and ethnic disparities in NYS adult obesity, BRFSS 2011-2021



+ Includes American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, other race or multiracial, non-Hispanic

Table 1. Overweight and Obesity^a, New York State Adults, 2021 BRFSS

	Neither Overweight nor Obesity		Overweight ^b		Obesity ^c	
	% ^d	95% CI ^d	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
NYS Statewide [n=39,095]	36.4	35.4-37.3	34.5	33.6-35.5	29.1	28.2-30.0
Sex						
Male	31.5	30.2-32.8	40.1	38.7-41.4	28.4	27.2-29.6
Female	41.4	40.0-42.8	28.8	27.6-30.0	29.8	28.6-31.1
Age						
18-24	54.8	51.3-58.3	24.4	21.4-27.3	20.8	18.0-23.7
25-34	42.4	39.9-44.9	31.2	28.8-33.5	26.5	24.2-28.7
35-44	32.6	30.2-35.0	37.5	35.1-39.9	29.9	27.8-32.1
45-54	27.9	25.6-30.2	36.3	33.9-38.6	35.9	33.6-38.2
55-64	27.8	25.7-29.9	37.9	35.6-40.1	34.3	32.2-36.4
65+	36.6	34.8-38.3	36.2	34.5-37.9	27.3	25.7-28.9
Race/Ethnicity						
White, non-Hispanic	37.4	36.2-38.6	34.1	33.0-35.3	28.5	27.4-29.5
Black, non-Hispanic	27.0	24.5-29.4	36.3	33.6-38.9	36.8	34.1-39.4
Hispanic	29.1	26.9-31.3	37.4	35.1-39.7	33.5	31.2-35.8
All other race groups combined ^e	53.3	49.5-57.0	30.2	26.8-33.7	16.5	13.8-19.2
Annual Household Income						
<\$25,000	31.8	29.3-34.2	33.8	31.3-36.3	34.4	32.0-36.9
\$25,000-\$49,999	34.1	31.9-36.2	33.8	31.8-35.8	32.2	30.2-34.1
\$50,000 and greater	36.1	34.7-37.5	36.6	35.2-38.0	27.3	26.1-28.6
Missing ^f	41.9	39.8-44.1	31.4	29.4-33.4	26.7	24.8-28.6
Educational Attainment						
Less than high school (HS)	28.4	25.3-31.5	36.6	33.4-39.9	35.0	31.9-38.1
High school or GED	33.6	31.7-35.5	33.9	32.1-35.7	32.5	30.7-34.3
Some post-HS	33.9	32.1-35.8	34.3	32.5-36.2	31.7	30.0-33.4
College graduate	42.8	41.3-44.3	34.4	33.0-35.8	22.8	21.5-24.0
Disability^g						
Yes	30.3	28.5-32.1	31.6	29.8-33.3	38.1	36.3-40.0
No	38.7	37.5-39.8	35.4	34.3-36.6	25.9	24.9-26.9
Urban-Rural						
Urban	36.5	35.5-37.5	34.5	33.6-35.5	28.9	28.1-29.8
Rural	29.9	26.5-33.3	34.2	30.7-37.6	35.9	32.2-39.6
Region						
New York City (NYC)	40.5	38.8-42.1	33.9	32.2-35.5	25.7	24.2-27.1
NYS exclusive of NYC	33.4	32.3-34.5	35.0	33.9-36.1	31.6	30.5-32.6

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, non-Hispanic

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

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

References



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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 having overweight BMI status if their BMI was equal to or greater than 25.0, but less than 30.0. They were classified as having obese BMI status if their BMI was 30.0 or greater.

Program Contributions



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