

Physical Activity Among New Hampshire Adults

Findings of the New Hampshire Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey and State Indicator Report on Physical Activity, 2010

The United States Department of Health and Human Services defines physical activity as any form of exercise or movement of the body that uses energy. Some examples of physical activity include active household chores, yard work, walking the dog, dancing, gardening, or shoveling snow.

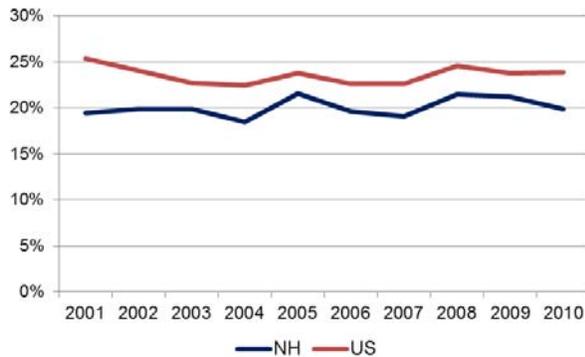
Benefits of Physical Activity

Inactive people of all ages can improve their health by becoming moderately active on a regular basis. Regular physical activity has been linked to reduced risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and colon cancer. Physical activity can also reduce the risk of depression and anxiety and help achieve or maintain a healthy weight.

Physical Activity Rates for New Hampshire Adults

In 2010, 20.1% of New Hampshire adults did not engage in any leisure time physical activity. The proportion of adults reporting inactivity has not changed in the past 10 years.

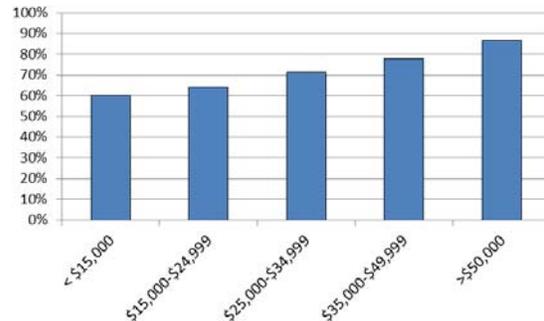
No leisure-time physical activity among adults, New Hampshire and United States, BRFSS, 2001-2010



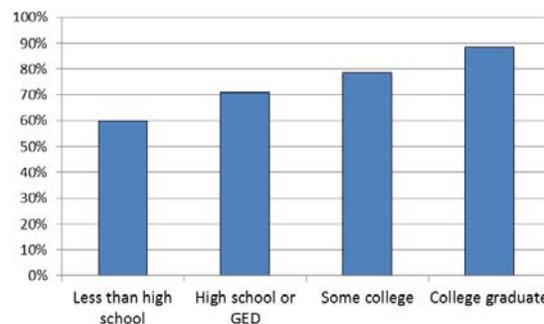
Activity limitations that pose a barrier to physical activity are reported by 20.0% of New Hampshire adults. Among New Hampshire adults with limitations, 36.4% reported no leisure-time physical activity. Among New Hampshire adults who reported no limitations, only 15.9% reported no leisure-time physical activity.

Reported leisure-time physical activity increased with income and education. Those with higher incomes and/or higher education were significantly more likely to report physical activity outside regular work hours compared with respondents who reported having lower incomes and less education.

Leisure-time physical activity among New Hampshire adults, by income, BRFSS, 2010



Leisure-time physical activity among New Hampshire adults, by education, BRFSS, 2010



Physical Activity and Reported Perception of Health

According Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), of New Hampshire adults who did *not* report any leisure-time physical activity in the last 30 days:

- Only 40.9% identified themselves as being in excellent or very good health
- 17.0% reported 14 or more mentally unhealthy days during past 30 days

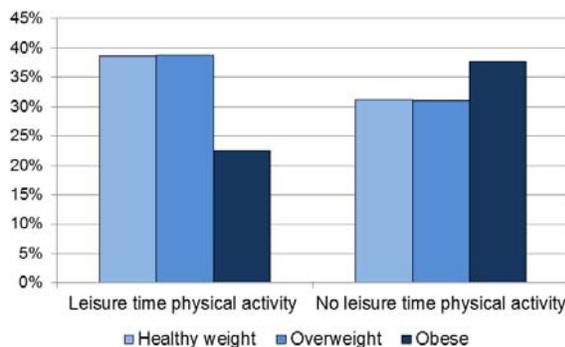
Among New Hampshire adults who *did* report leisure-time physical activities in the past 30 days:

- 67.1% identified themselves as being in excellent or very good health
- 7.4% reported 14 or more mentally unhealthy days during past 30 days (more than half the rate of those who report no leisure-time activity)

Physical Activity and Obesity

The relationship between physical activity and higher body mass index (BMI) is shown at the top of the next column. Among those adults reporting leisure-time physical activity, 22.5% were obese. Of the adults who reported no leisure-time physical activity, 37.7% were obese.

Healthy weight, overweight, and obesity among New Hampshire adults, by leisure-time physical activity, BRFSS, 2010

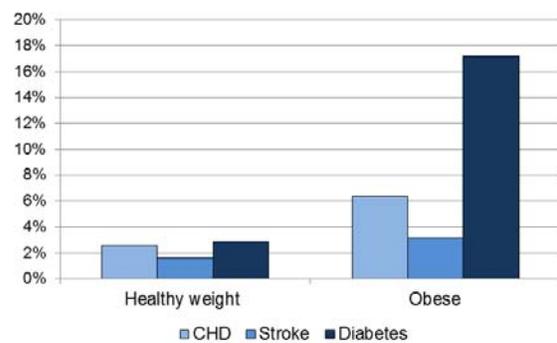


Consequences of Overweight and Obesity

Research shows that overweight and obesity are associated with an increased risk for several chronic diseases and conditions: coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, high blood pressure, stroke, liver and gallbladder disease.

In 2010, 8.0% of New Hampshire adults reported having been diagnosed with diabetes, 4.4% had been diagnosed with coronary heart disease, 4.0% had a history of heart attack, and 2.2% had a history of stroke. The prevalence of these conditions was significantly higher among obese adults when compared with adults reporting healthy weight.

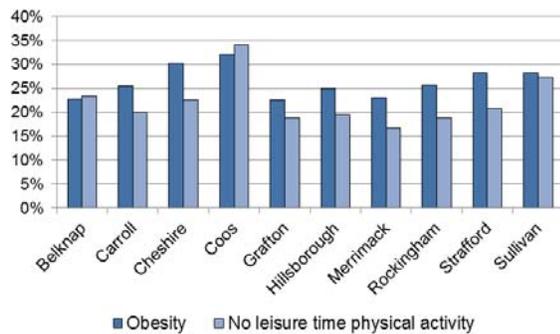
Coronary heart disease, stroke, and diabetes among New Hampshire adults, by weight category, 2010



New Hampshire County Estimates

New Hampshire county data show minor differences in prevalence of reported physical activity, obesity, and associated chronic disease conditions. Prevalence of overweight and obesity was the highest among Coos County residents. Similarly, the prevalence of reported no leisure-time physical activity, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes was the highest among adults living in Coos County.

Obesity and *no* leisure-time physical activity among New Hampshire adults, by county, 2010



State Indicator Report on Physical Activity, 2010

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *State Indicator Report on Physical Activity 2010 (SIRPA)* provides information on physical activity behavior and physical activity access, land use, and transportation policies within each state. The physical activity behavioral indicators are based on data provided by the BRFSS and the CDC Database of State Legislative and Regulatory Action to Prevent Obesity and Improve Nutrition and Physical Activity. New Hampshire data from the SIRPA showed that only 16% of New Hampshire census blocks have a park within a half-mile of their boundary.

The SIRPA also reported that between December 2001 and December 2009 no state-level, community-scale design or land use policies were enacted. The SIRPA counted policies that met at least one of the following criteria:

- Promote zoning regulations and building codes within community design
- Encourage transit-oriented development, development density, and policies addressing street layout
- Locate stores, jobs, and schools within walking distance of where people live
- Improve preservation or create green space and improve aesthetic qualities of the built environment
- Provide places people need or want to visit, such as retail or commercial

establishments or places of employment, close enough to be reached by methods other than driving

- Promote school siting, zoning, or development within easy walking or biking distance of residential areas
- Utilize health impact assessments to help with community design

Local Policies

To help provide safe and accessible physical activity, communities need to address:

- A lack of sidewalks and bicycle lanes on narrow or heavily traveled roads
- Busy traffic intersections with inadequate crosswalks
- Local zoning laws that discourage the connection between residential areas and schools and other destinations

In 2011, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Obesity Prevention Program conducted a survey, in collaboration with the New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions, to assess existing municipal policies that relate to healthy eating and physical activity. The Survey of Municipalities was completed with the help of the nine New Hampshire Regional Planning Commissions, the Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program, chronic disease epidemiologist, and the many city and town employees that completed the survey. A data brief detailing the survey results will be released later this year.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/index.html>. Accessed on: 02/01/2011.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State Indicator report on Physical Activity, 2010. Atlanta, GA:U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010.