Community Health Profiles

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
SECOND EDITION — 2006

TAKE CARE
East Harlem
Manhattan
**Community Health Profile, Second Edition: East Harlem**

New York City is the most diverse city in the U.S. — a fact reflected in the distinct character of each neighborhood. The second edition of the Community Health Profiles uses Take Care New York (TCNY), the city’s health policy, to examine preventable causes of illness and death in all of NYC’s 42 neighborhoods. This report updates the 2002 profile (available at nyc.gov/health) by providing more recent and time-trend data, and a greater variety of health statistics.

Key health issues in East Harlem include:

- East Harlem residents experience more barriers to health care access than those in NYC overall, with 3 in 10 without a regular doctor and more than 20% of residents visiting the emergency department for routine health care. Also, the rate of uninsurance in East Harlem increased between 2002 and 2004 (page 5).
- Although death rates due to HIV disease have decreased in East Harlem during the past decade, this community has the second highest HIV-related death rate in the city (page 8).
- Almost two thirds of East Harlem adults are overweight or obese, and black and Hispanic residents are more likely to be obese than other residents (page 14).

**Methods:** While this report provides important information, it is not intended to be an exhaustive examination of the health of East Harlem residents, as not all health problems and their causes could be covered. Only statistically significant findings are discussed in the text. For complete information on methods, see Technical Notes (page 15).

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**East Harlem at a Glance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Poverty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>108,100</td>
<td>East Harlem</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in East Harlem are younger than those in Manhattan and New York City overall</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-17 years</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44 years</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64 years</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+ years</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In East Harlem, the percent of residents living below the poverty level is nearly twice as high as in Manhattan and NYC overall</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Foreign-born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Harlem residents aged 25 and older have completed fewer years of education than those in Manhattan and NYC overall</td>
<td>The percent of East Harlem residents born outside the U.S. is lower than in Manhattan and NYC overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 8th grade</td>
<td>East Harlem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school, no diploma</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Harlem</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Race / Ethnicity**

East Harlem has higher proportions of black and Hispanic residents than Manhattan and NYC overall

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Data Source: U.S. Census 2000/NYC Department of City Planning
In 2004, the Health Department created a citywide health policy called Take Care New York (TCNY) to help improve the health of New Yorkers. TCNY identifies 10 key areas that cause significant illness and death but can be improved through intervention by individuals, health care providers, government agencies, and other organizations.

This report examines how well East Harlem residents are doing on health indicators for each of the 10 TCNY goals. It examines areas in which the community is a health leader, as well as areas that need improvement. The TCNY report card below shows where East Harlem ranks among all 42 New York City neighborhoods. (See Technical Notes for information about how neighborhoods were defined and ranked.)

### Take Care New York report card

East Harlem ranks below average on most indicators when compared to the 41 other NYC neighborhoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Take Care New York Goals</th>
<th>Below Average (bottom 10)</th>
<th>Average (middle 22)</th>
<th>Above Average (top 10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Have a regular doctor</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Be tobacco-free</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Keep your heart healthy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Know your HIV status</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Get help for depression</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Live free of alcohol and drugs</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Get checked for cancer</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Get the immunizations you need</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Make your home safe and healthy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Have a healthy baby</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How Residents Rate Their Own Health

**Overall health**

Nearly one third of adults in East Harlem consider themselves to be in fair or poor health

- East Harlem: 31%
- Manhattan: 18%
- New York City: 21%

People are good at rating their own health. In general, when asked to rate their general health as excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor, those who say “fair” or “poor” are more likely to have health problems than those who report better health.

In East Harlem, residents are more likely to report being in fair or poor health (31%) than those in Manhattan (18%) and in New York City overall (21%).
Overall Death Rates in East Harlem

**Death rates**

In East Harlem, death rates are higher than in Manhattan and NYC overall.

The death rate in East Harlem has decreased by 15% in the past decade, mirroring the rate drop in NYC overall. However, death rates in this community have remained consistently higher than in both Manhattan and New York City overall.

In 2003-2004, the average annual death rate in East Harlem was more than 50% higher than in both Manhattan and New York City overall (1,084/100,000 vs. 697/100,000 in Manhattan and 718/100,000 in NYC).

Throughout this profile, cause-specific death rates are provided for TCNY goals.

**Line graphs.** All time-trend data are presented as annual averages with 2 or 3 years of data combined. For example, in this graph, the first point on each line represents the average annual death rate for 1995 and 1996 combined.

**Premature death**

People who die before age 75 can be thought of as dying early, or prematurely. If a person dies early, their years of potential life lost (YPLLs) can be calculated by subtracting their age at death from 75 years to get a measure of premature death.

The causes of premature death differ across communities. The primary cause of premature death in East Harlem is heart disease, while in both Manhattan and New York City overall, the primary cause is cancer.

**Top 5 causes of years of potential life lost**

Heart disease causes the most years of potential life lost in East Harlem.

*Other includes Certain Perinatal Conditions (5%), Diabetes (3%), Accidents (3%), Diseases of the Nervous System (2%), Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease (2%), and Other (25%).

Data Sources: Bureau of Vital Statistics, NYC DOHMH, 2002-04; U.S. Census 1990 and 2000/NYC Department of City Planning
Take Care New York Goals

GOAL 1 Have a Regular Doctor or Other Health Care Provider

Access to good medical care helps people prevent illnesses, identify health conditions early, and treat health problems. Some conditions can and should be managed regularly outside the hospital. Higher rates of these avoidable hospitalizations can indicate reduced access to health care in a community.

Having a “medical home”—a personal doctor or other health care provider and a regular place of care other than the emergency department (ED)—is a critical component of good health care access. In East Harlem, residents are more likely to be without a regular doctor than those in Manhattan and NYC overall (29% vs. 24% in Manhattan and NYC). In addition, East Harlem residents are about 3 times more likely to go to the ED when they are sick or need health advice (22%) than those in Manhattan (6%) and NYC overall (8%).

**Access to care**

Without a primary provider, people may seek routine health care in the emergency department (ED)

![Bar chart showing the percentage of adults without a personal doctor or who go to the ED when sick or need health advice in East Harlem, Manhattan, and New York City.](chart)

Percent of adults (18+)

- No personal doctor: 29% East Harlem, 24% Manhattan, 24% New York City
- Go to ED when sick or need health advice: 22% East Harlem, 6% Manhattan, 8% New York City

**TCNY Target:** <20% by 2008

**Avoidable hospitalizations**

The 2004 avoidable hospitalization rate in East Harlem ranks poorly (42nd) among 42 NYC neighborhoods

**Health insurance**

East Harlem residents are more likely to be uninsured than those in Manhattan and NYC overall

![Bar chart showing the percentage of adults insured now, insured now but uninsured some time in the past year, or uninsured now in East Harlem, Manhattan, and New York City.](chart)

- Insured now, and for entire past year: 63% East Harlem, 78% Manhattan, 71% New York City
- Insured now, but uninsured some time in past year: 10% East Harlem, 9% Manhattan, 11% New York City
- Uninsured now: 18% East Harlem, 27% Manhattan, 13% New York City

Health insurance is important for access to health care. In East Harlem, the uninsurance rate more than doubled between 2002 and 2004. Although the size of the increase cannot be precisely estimated because of small sample size, lack of health insurance in this community has clearly gone up. In addition, residents in East Harlem are more likely to be currently uninsured than those in Manhattan and NYC overall. Another 10% of residents in this community went without health insurance at some time during the past year.
GOAL 2  Be Tobacco-Free

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in New York City and the cause of many illnesses, including heart disease, stroke, emphysema, and lung cancer. East Harlem residents are more likely to currently smoke than those in Manhattan and NYC overall (27% vs. 17% in Manhattan and 18% in NYC). Many methods to quit smoking are available, and more than half of smokers in East Harlem (59%) are trying to kick the habit.

Residents who smoke
More than one quarter of adults in East Harlem smoke . . .  

![Bar graph showing smoking rates in East Harlem, Manhattan, and New York City. The graph indicates that East Harlem has the highest smoking rate among the three regions.]

Attempts to quit smoking in the past year
. . . but most smokers are trying to quit

![Bar graph showing quit rates in East Harlem, Manhattan, and New York City. The graph indicates that East Harlem has the highest quit rate among the three regions.]

GOAL 3  Keep Your Heart Healthy

The heart disease hospitalization rate in East Harlem has increased by 10% in the past decade. Residents had an average annual heart disease hospitalization rate in 2003-2004 that was more than 80% higher than the Manhattan rate and 45% higher than the rate in NYC overall (2,706/100,000 vs. 1,489/100,000 in Manhattan and 1,856/100,000 in NYC). The heart disease death rate in 2003-2004 (318/100,000) was higher than the rate in Manhattan (234/100,000) but similar to the NYC overall rate (297/100,000).

Heart disease hospitalizations
Heart disease causes a higher hospitalization rate in East Harlem

![Line graph showing heart disease hospitalization rates per 100,000 adults. The graph indicates that East Harlem has the highest hospitalization rate among the three regions.]

Deaths due to heart disease
Heart disease is a leading cause of death in NYC

![Line graph showing heart disease death rates per 100,000 people. The graph indicates that East Harlem has the highest death rate among the three regions.]

High blood pressure and high cholesterol. Both of these conditions contribute to heart disease. In East Harlem, 32% of adults were told by a health care professional that they have high blood pressure (higher than 22% in Manhattan and similar to 26% in NYC overall), and one quarter (26%) were told that they have high cholesterol (similar to 27% in Manhattan and the same as in NYC overall).
In addition to smoking, high blood cholesterol and high blood pressure, other factors that put people at risk for heart disease — lack of physical activity and obesity — can be prevented or controlled.

Obesity can lead to a variety of health problems, including heart disease and diabetes. Rates of obesity are increasing rapidly in New York City and across the U.S., making it a major public health concern. In East Harlem, one third of adults are obese, which is 55% higher than in New York City overall.

The increasing prevalence of obesity in the U.S. has contributed to an epidemic of diabetes. About 95% of diabetes cases are type 2 diabetes, which is strongly associated with obesity. Uncontrolled diabetes can worsen the harmful effects of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and other risk factors for heart disease.

In East Harlem, adults are more likely to have diabetes (13%) than those in Manhattan (7%) and New York City overall (9%).

Physical activity helps people maintain a healthy weight and strengthens the cardiovascular system. Nearly half (48%) of East Harlem residents report not exercising at all, compared to one quarter (24%) of Manhattan residents. Fewer than 4 in 10 East Harlem residents (38%) report exercising at least 3 days a week.
GOAL 4  Know Your HIV Status

Wide disparities exist in HIV across New York City communities. This is particularly apparent in East Harlem, where the rate of HIV diagnoses and the rate of people living with HIV/AIDS in the community are more than double the rate in NYC overall.

The death rate due to HIV disease has dropped by more than 70% during the past decade in this community. However, in 2003-2004, the average annual HIV-related death rate in East Harlem was still more than three times the Manhattan and NYC overall rates (68/100,000 vs. 22/100,000 in Manhattan and 18/100,000 in NYC).

Death rate due to HIV

HIV-related death rates in East Harlem are much higher than in NYC overall but have dropped dramatically in the past decade.

HIV/AIDS testing and prevention

Everyone should know their HIV status. However, an estimated one quarter of New Yorkers living with HIV do not know they are infected, delaying treatment and increasing the risk that they will transmit the disease to others. East Harlem residents are more likely to be tested for HIV than those in Manhattan and New York City overall. However, one third of positive HIV test results (32%) are “late” diagnoses (HIV has already progressed to AIDS) in East Harlem.

The most common way people get HIV is through sexual contact, and having multiple sex partners increases the risk of HIV. Condoms offer protection from HIV when engaging in sexual activities. Less than one third (27%) of East Harlem adults who had more than 1 sex partner in the past year reported using a condom at their last sexual encounter.

**HIV/AIDS in 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total HIV diagnoses per 100,000 people* (13+)</th>
<th>% HIV diagnosed concurrently with AIDS** (13+)</th>
<th>People living with HIV/AIDS per 100,000 people* (13+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Harlem</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>3,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>2,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>1,419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Rates are age-adjusted.
** Within 31 days of HIV diagnosis – crude percents


**HIV testing**

East Harlem adults are more likely to have had an HIV test in the past year.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Harlem</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent are age-adjusted.
Data Source: NYC Community Health Survey 2003

**Condom use at last sexual encounter**

Less than one third of those with multiple sex partners used a condom in East Harlem.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Harlem</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent are age-adjusted.
Data Source: NYC Community Health Survey 2002-03-04
GOAL 5  Get Help for Depression

Psychological distress

One in 12 adults in East Harlem suffers from serious psychological distress

Depression is a serious but treatable health condition that frequently goes undiagnosed. Serious psychological distress is associated with depression and other mental illnesses.

In East Harlem, 8% of residents experience serious psychological distress, twice the percent in Manhattan overall (4%).

Serious psychological distress can be identified in individuals using Kessler’s K6 scale, a validated measure consisting of 6 simple questions about mood. Percents are age-adjusted.

Data Source: NYC Community Health Survey 2002-03

Mental illness

Hospitalizations for mental illness are higher in East Harlem

Hospitalization rates are one way to look at serious mental illness in a neighborhood. Residents in East Harlem have had higher mental illness hospitalization rates over the past 10 years (excluding alcohol- or drug-related illness) than those in Manhattan and in New York City overall. In addition, the mental illness hospitalization rate has increased by 30% during the past decade.

In 2003-2004, the community’s average annual rate of mental illness hospitalizations (2,283/100,000) was higher than both the Manhattan rate (1,011/100,000) and the rate in New York City overall (813/100,000).

Understanding hospitalizations and access to health care. Hospitalization data are useful in understanding the burden that certain conditions place on the health care system, but not necessarily in measuring the exact extent of illness in a community. Variations in hospitalization rates may reflect not only differences in rates of illness, but also differences in access to health care. For example, the kinds of health institutions available to residents differ by community, as might the ability of residents to pay for those resources. If a community has a specialized residential institution for a certain type of disease, such as mental illness or stroke, people from outside that neighborhood may come to reside at this institution for care, resulting in an increase in reported hospitalizations for that disease in the community.
GOAL 6  Live Free of Dependence on Alcohol and Drugs

Binge drinking
Nearly 1 in 6 adults in East Harlem engaged in binge drinking in the past month

![Binge drinking chart]

The abuse of alcohol and drugs can lead to many preventable injuries, illnesses, and deaths, including injury in motor-vehicle crashes, liver disease, and violence.

Estimates of binge drinking represent the risk of immediate alcohol-related problems, such as alcohol-poisoning, injury and violence. In East Harlem, 15% of adults report engaging in at least one episode of binge drinking (defined as consuming 5 or more drinks on one occasion) in the past month.

Alcohol-related hospitalizations reflect both acute and chronic (e.g., liver disease) consequences of alcohol abuse. The alcohol-related hospitalization rate in East Harlem has increased by more than 10% in the past decade. In 2003-2004, the average annual alcohol-related hospitalization rate in this community was higher than in Manhattan and in New York City overall (1,276/100,000 vs. 595/100,000 in Manhattan and 439/100,000 in NYC).

The drug-related hospitalization rate in 2003-2004 was also higher (1,674/100,000) than in Manhattan (643/100,000) and New York City overall (595/100,000). However, the drug-related hospitalization rate in East Harlem has decreased by more than 20% in the past 10 years.

The death rate due to drugs in 2003-2004 was nearly three times as high in East Harlem as in NYC overall (28/100,000 vs. 10/100,000).

Alcohol-related hospitalizations
The alcohol-related hospitalization rate in East Harlem is double the NYC rate

![Alcohol-related hospitalizations chart]

Drug-related hospitalizations
The drug-related hospitalization rate in East Harlem is nearly three times the NYC rate

![Drug-related hospitalizations chart]

Drug-related deaths
The drug-related death rate in East Harlem is nearly triple the NYC overall

![Drug-related deaths chart]

Rates are age-adjusted.
Data Sources: New York State Department of Health Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System, 1995-2004; U.S. Census 1990 and 2000/NYC Department of City Planning

Percent of adults (18+)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East Harlem</th>
<th>Manhattan</th>
<th>New York City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percents are age-adjusted.
Data Source: NYC Community Health Survey 2002-03-04

GOAL 6  Live Free of Dependence on Alcohol and Drugs

Drug-related deaths
The drug-related death rate in East Harlem is nearly triple the NYC overall

![Drug-related deaths chart]

Rates are age-adjusted.
Cancer screening can save lives by preventing disease, catching cancer in its early stages and providing opportunities for treatment. TCNY has set specific screening targets for cervical, breast, and colon cancers.

Women in East Harlem are more likely to get Pap tests for cervical cancer and mammograms for breast cancer than women in NYC overall, meeting the TCNY target of more than 85%. However, only 4 in 10 adults aged 50 and older in East Harlem have had a colonoscopy in the past 10 years.

The highest cancer-related death rates among men in East Harlem are due to lung, prostate, and colon cancers. Among women, lung, breast, and colon cancers are the top 3 causes of cancer-related death.
Immunizations

Flu shot rates among older adults fall below the TCNY target and pneumococcal (pneumonia) immunizations are even lower.

Immunizations are not just for kids. Of all the deaths that could have been prevented by vaccination, 99% occur in adults. Take Care New York has set a target that more than 80% of adults aged 65 and older will get an annual flu (influenza) shot by 2008. The East Harlem flu immunization rate among older adults falls short of the TCNY target by almost 20%.

Immunization rates for pneumonia are lower than those for flu across NYC. Less than half of older adults in East Harlem have ever received the pneumococcal vaccine, which protects against one common cause of pneumonia.

Goal 9: Make Your Home Safe and Healthy

Childhood lead poisoning

Lead poisoning among young children continues to be a problem.

Childhood lead poisoning is a health problem that may be associated with decreased intelligence, learning and behavioral problems, and delayed growth and development. While the number of lead-poisoned children (0-17 years old) in New York City has declined dramatically over the past decade, the Health Department aims to eliminate lead poisoning by preventing children's exposure to lead-based paint and other sources of lead.

In 2004, 62 children in East Harlem (10/1,000) were newly identified with lead poisoning (defined as a blood lead level greater than or equal to 10 µg/dL).

Asthma in Adults and Children

Asthma

Asthma is more common among East Harlem adults.

Conditions, or “triggers,” in the home environment, such as the presence of second-hand smoke or dust, can cause asthma attacks. Some housing conditions associated with asthma triggers, such as rodent or roach infestation, are more common in some neighborhoods than others.

Adults in East Harlem are more likely to report having asthma (8%) than adults in Manhattan (4%) and New York City overall (5%).
Neighborhood asthma hospitalization rates depend in part on the percent of residents who have asthma. However, good medical management of asthma can prevent many asthma-related hospitalizations, and patients can work with health care providers to better control their asthma. Thus, the asthma hospitalization rate can also indicate poor access to health care.

Asthma hospitalization rates for adults and children (0-17 years old) in East Harlem are higher than in Manhattan and NYC overall, but have decreased in the past decade. In this community, the average annual hospitalization rate due to adult asthma in 2003-2004 was about 4 times higher than in Manhattan and NYC overall. The rate among children has declined by more than half in the past decade, decreasing disparities between this community and NYC overall.

**Goal 10 Have a Healthy Baby**

The health of babies depends on the health of mothers. Good health care for pregnant women includes high quality prenatal care beginning in the first trimester of pregnancy. The average annual percent of women who received late or no prenatal care has declined in East Harlem from 41% in 1995-1996 to 36% in 2003-2004, but remains higher than the Manhattan and NYC overall percents.

Teenage mothers and their babies face a number of risks. Pregnant teens are more likely to be poor and not complete high school than other teens, and they are more likely to have babies born with low birthweight than older women. The birth rate to teenage mothers has decreased over the past 10 years by more than 25% in East Harlem. However, the average birth rate to teen moms in 2003-2004 in this community (141/1,000) was still almost 90% higher than in NYC overall (75/1,000).
Babies born with low birthweight tend to have more health problems than others. In 2003-2004, the average percent of babies born with low birthweight in East Harlem has decreased in the past decade to meet the Manhattan and NYC overall proportion of 9%.

Infant mortality (the death of babies in the first year of life) has declined over the past 10 years in NYC. The 2002-2004 rate in East Harlem was 8/1,000, double the Manhattan rate and similar to NYC overall.

**Low birthweight**

Nearly 1 in 10 babies is born with low birthweight

![Graph showing the percent of live births with low birthweight from 1995-96 to 2003-04, with East Harlem, Manhattan, and New York City data points.](image)

Low birthweight is defined as <2,500 grams (5.5 pounds).

*Data Source: Bureau of Vital Statistics, NYC DOHMH, 1995-2004*

**Infant mortality rate (IMR)**

The IMR in NYC is still higher than the TCNY target

![Graph showing the infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births from 1993-95 to 2004-04, with East Harlem, Manhattan, and New York City data points.](image)

TCNY Target: <5.0 per 1,000 by 2008

*Data Source: Bureau of Vital Statistics, NYC DOHMH, 1993-2004*

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**Neighborhood Health Highlight: Overweight and Obesity**

Every New York City neighborhood has different health concerns. Here we highlight health care access in East Harlem.

One third of East Harlem adults (31%) is overweight and another third (31%) is obese, which is the highest proportion of obese adults among all neighborhoods in New York City. Obesity contributes to a number of other serious health problems, including heart disease and diabetes. In fact, obese adults in East Harlem are more likely to report having diabetes than non-obese residents (18% vs. 11%).

Risk of obesity varies by racial and ethnic group as well. In East Harlem, black and Hispanic residents (34% and 33%, respectively) are more likely to be obese than white residents (18%).

**Obese adults in East Harlem are more likely to have diabetes**

![Bar chart showing the percent of adults with diabetes by obese status in East Harlem. Not Obese (11%) vs. Obese (18%)](image)

Obesity defined as a body-mass-index (BMI) of 30 or greater.

*Data Source: NYC Community Health Survey 2002-03-04*

**Black and Hispanic residents in East Harlem are more likely to be obese**

![Bar chart showing the percent of obese adults by race/ethnicity in East Harlem. White (18%), Black (34%), Hispanic (33%), Other (17%).](image)

Obesity defined as a body-mass-index (BMI) of 30 or greater.

*Data Source: NYC Community Health Survey 2002-03-04*

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**TAKING ACTION**

Although body weight is basically a result of the balance between "calories in" and "calories out," many factors affect this balance, such as the availability of healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity in a neighborhood. Neighborhoods can support healthy lifestyles by making healthy, affordable food and opportunities for physical activity available to residents. In addition, individuals can work toward allotting time for physical activity in their schedules and having more healthy, balanced diets.

For information on healthy lifestyle resources, call 311.
Technical notes

Analyses
All analyses were conducted by the Bureau of Epidemiology Services, NYC DOHMH, unless otherwise indicated. All estimates in this report were age standardized to the Year 2000 Standard Population, except for age-specific data and mother-child health indicators. All CHS analyses were done in SUDAAN to account for complex survey design and were weighted to the New York City population according to the U.S. Census 2000.

Data sources
NYS DOH hospitalization data: Includes hospitalizations of NYC residents that occurred anywhere in New York State. Patient zip code was used to classify hospitalizations into 42 neighborhoods. Data from 1995-2003 updated in April 2005; 2004 data updated in July 2005
Vital Statistics data: Includes births and deaths of NYC residents that occurred within New York City. Data were combined across years to increase statistical stability and average annual rates are presented. In addition, infant mortality rates (IMR) were calculated as 3-year annual averages, and this statistic and others may differ from the presentation in “Summary of Vital Statistics” reports from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, NYC DOHMH.
Community Health Survey data: The NYC Community Health Survey (CHS) is an annual random-digit-dial telephone survey of approximately 10,000 adults in New York City. This profile uses the following datasets from this survey: NYC CHS 2002, NYC CHS 2003, NYC CHS 2004, NYC CHS 2002-03-04, NYC CHS 2002-03, NYC CHS 2002 & 2004, and NYC CHS 2003-04. The combined-year datasets increase statistical power, allowing for more stable analyses at the neighborhood level.

Neighborhood Definitions
The 42 NYC neighborhoods are based on the United Hospital Fund definitions of neighborhood, which are specified by zip code. For a complete listing of all 42 neighborhoods and their zip codes, go to nyc.gov/health. The zip codes included in analyses of East Harlem are 10029 and 10035. Please note that some neighborhoods were combined for statistical purposes in the CHS 2002, CHS 2003 and CHS 2004 datasets to make a total of 33 (2002) or 34 (2003, 2004) neighborhoods.

Avoidable Hospitalizations
Data based on Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions (called “avoidable hospitalizations” in this report) were calculated using the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) classification of inpatient hospitalization data. Conditions in the overall measure include: Diabetes Short-term Complications Admission Rate, Diabetes Long-term Complications Admission Rate, Pediatric Asthma Admission Rate, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Admission Rate, Pediatric Gastroenteritis Admission Rate, Hypertension Admission Rate, Congestive Heart Failure Admission Rate, Dehydration Admission Rate, Bacterial Pneumonia Admission Rate, Urinary Tract Infection Admission Rate, Angina without Procedure Admission Rate, Uncontrolled Diabetes Admission Rate, Adult Asthma Admission Rate, and Rate of Lower-extremity Amputation among Patients with Diabetes.

Significance Testing
For all data, 95% confidence limits were calculated for neighborhood, borough, and NYC estimates. If these ranges did not overlap, a significant difference was inferred. This is a conservative measure of statistical difference. This methodology also was used to examine differences between years in neighborhood trend data. Neighborhood Health Highlight data were evaluated using t-tests with a significance level of p-value < .05. Only robust findings found to be statistically significant are discussed in the text. In addition, all NYC CHS estimates were evaluated for statistical stability using the relative standard error (RSE). Those estimates with an RSE > .30 are flagged in graphs, “Estimate is unstable due to small sample size and should be interpreted with caution.”

TCNY report card
The neighborhood was classified according to where it ranked in comparison to the other 41 NYC neighborhoods with Above Average = rankings 1-10, Average = rankings 11-32, and Below Average = rankings 33-42 where 1 = the best neighborhood score. Rankings were computed by combining (or in some cases, using only one indicator) standardized measures (z-scores) of the following health indicators for each TCNY goal: TCNY#1 - primary care provider, insurance, ED visits; TCNY#2 - current smokers; TCNY#3 - diabetes, obesity, exercise, heart disease hospitalizations, heart disease mortality; TCNY#4 - HIV testing, AIDS mortality; TCNY#5 - serious psychological distress, mental illness hospitalizations; TCNY#6 - binge drinking, alcohol-related hospitalizations, drug-related hospitalizations, drug-related mortality; TCNY#7 - cervical cancer screening, breast cancer screening, colon cancer screening, cancer mortality; TCNY#8 - flu immunization; TCNY#9 - child lead poisoning, adult asthma rates; TCNY#10 - prenatal care, teenage mothers, low birthweight, infant mortality.

Cover Photograph: Duke Ellington statue at 110th Street and 5th Avenue, Manhattan. Photo by Elizabeth Drackett. Maps by Susan Resnick.

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Community Health Profile for East Harlem

This report is an updated, expanded second edition of the 2002 Community Health Profile for East Harlem.

NEW IN THE SECOND EDITION:
- Take Care New York report card
- Time-trend data on births, hospitalizations, and deaths
- More neighborhood-specific health statistics
- Robust estimates from data through 2004

First and second edition reports on all 42 New York City neighborhoods are available from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene online or by mail.

Web: nyc.gov/health
   Click on "My Community’s Health"

Email: profiles@health.nyc.gov

Mail:
Community Health Profiles
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Division of Epidemiology
125 Worth Street, Room 315, CN-6
New York, NY 10013

For more information about health issues in this report, please call 311.

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