

Newborn Home Visits



Ensuring that our children get a healthy start in life is a public health priority. Research shows that improving the health of babies has benefits that last well into adulthood. The Brooklyn District Public Health Office (DPHO), in collaboration with the Department's Bureau of Maternal, Infant, and Reproductive Health, is working with new mothers in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Bushwick to keep their infants healthy.

Help for New Mothers

In this program, community health workers from the DPHO conduct in-home visits to new mothers. Visits are made within a month of the birth date. The purpose of this visit is to:

- Provide education about maternal and child health issues such as breastfeeding, prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), parent-infant bonding, gestational diabetes and postpartum depression.
- Identify and address home health hazards, such as peeling paint that may contain lead, and missing window guards and smoke detectors.
- Make referrals to more intensive case management programs, if needed.
- Help mothers get health insurance and find a regular doctor.

The home visiting program has helped hundreds of mothers give the best possible care to their newborns.



Neighborhood Research



With its offices in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Bushwick, the Brooklyn District Public Health Office (DPHO) is well positioned to understand the real concerns of community residents. Learning how residents think about health issues and the barriers and challenges to good health is critically important in guiding the work of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

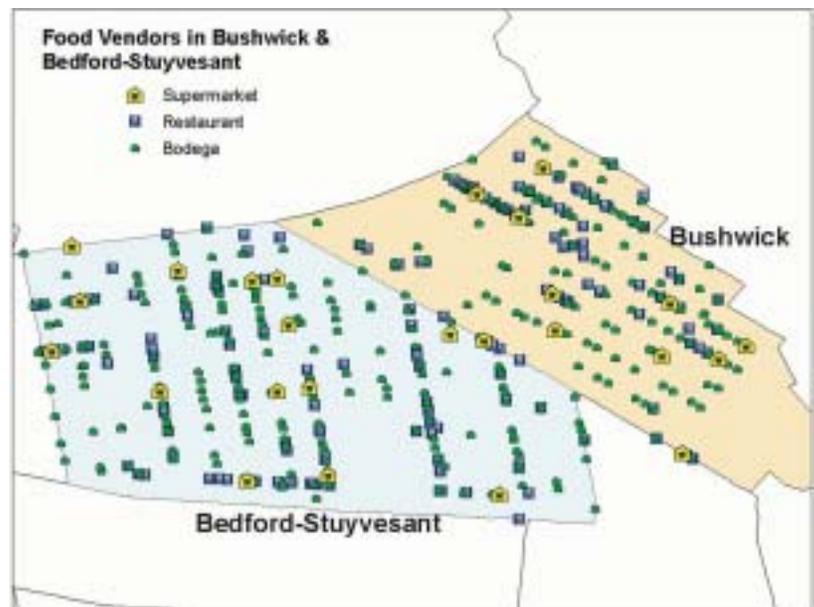
DPHO staff has been interviewing residents and gathering information about the community. Here are some examples of our work.

Addressing Rats and Garbage

Community residents say the rat problem is one of the most important quality-of-life issues they face, and data suggest that Bushwick and Bedford-Stuyvesant have been hard hit by this problem. The DPHO conducted interviews in these communities to find out how garbage is handled and how people characterize the rat problem on the blocks where they live. Several strategies for addressing this problem were identified:

- Reducing food sources for rats around apartment buildings by more effectively storing garbage.
- Developing a more efficient garbage pick-up schedule, so garbage bags are not left on the curb overnight.
- Educating residents about how to report infestations.

This information will be useful in planning community education programs and in informing city agencies about residents' concerns.



Availability of Healthy Foods

Nutrition is an important health issue. DPHO staff surveyed all supermarkets, bodegas, and restaurants in the two communities. The availability and cost of fresh fruits, vegetables and lowfat milk were assessed, as were the location of fast food establishments. Here are some of the findings:

- Fruits and vegetables were scarce in bodegas.
- Lowfat milk was often not available.

- Most restaurants were take-out only, and fast food outlets included both national-chain brands (such as McDonalds) and non-chain restaurants (mostly Chinese and Latin food establishments).

This information will be shared with community members and policymakers to assist in developing strategies for improving access to healthy food.



Physical Activity

In North and Central Brooklyn, nearly 1 in 3 adults is considered obese, according to a recent Health Department survey. The survey also found that more than 40% of residents get no physical activity. The Brooklyn District Public Health Office (DPHO) is working to change this through efforts aimed at encouraging residents to get active.



Work in Schools, Day-Care Centers and After-School Programs

SPARK (Sports, Play & Active Recreation for Kids) is a physical education curriculum that gets kids moving. The DPHO organizes SPARK trainings for teachers and other staff in elementary schools, day-care centers, Head Start Centers, and after-school programs.

Nearly 60 sites and 200 teachers and staff have been trained.

Work in Community

Shape Up is a free, year-round fitness program – for adults and kids alike – sponsored by the New York City Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene and Parks and Recreation. Offered 5 days per week, the program focuses on flexibility, strength training and cardiovascular fitness, as well as strategies for a healthy lifestyle.

Shape Up is offered at the following sites:

- BGTTF Bushwick Beacon Lighthouse @ IS 383
- Family Dynamics Beacon @ MS 35
- Brownsville Recreation Center
- Tompkins Community Center
- Van Dyke Community Center
- Jackie Robinson Center for Physical Culture @ IS 292
- CAMBA Beacon @ IS 271

Community Coordination

The DPHO is working to make more community residents aware of opportunities for getting and staying fit by:

- Partnering with other organizations that provide fitness programs.
- Publishing and distributing **A Guide to Fitness Programs in Bedford Stuyvesant and Bushwick**.
- Participating in coalitions and community initiatives.

