

# Health Disparities in New York City



New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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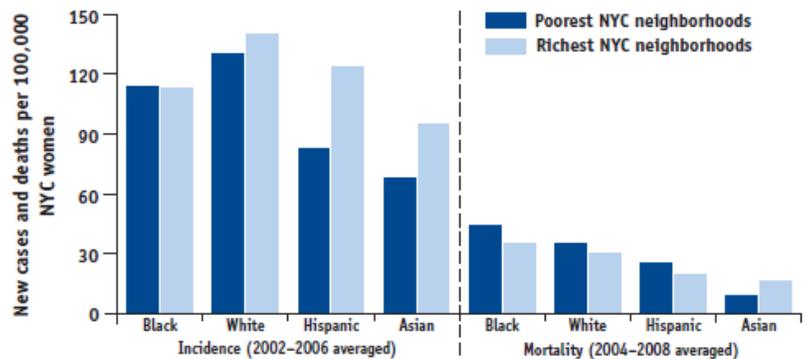
## WHAT ARE HEALTH DISPARITIES?

Health disparities are differences in health between groups of people because of social inequalities, such as poor neighborhood environment, lower-quality health care, or other social factors. Health problems can be related to people's race/ethnicity, where they live, or how much money they have.

### New cases of **breast cancer** are highest among high-income white women, but breast cancer deaths are highest among low-income black women

Since 1994, breast cancer death rates have decreased for all NYC women. New cases of breast cancer occur most often among white women living in the richest NYC neighborhoods. Both black and white women die from breast cancer more often than women of other racial/ethnic backgrounds. However, black women have the highest breast cancer death rates, which in 2008, was triple the rate among Asians.

New cases of breast cancer and death rates vary by race/ethnicity and neighborhood income



Rates are age-adjusted.

Sources: Bureau of Vital Statistics, NYC DOHMH, 2004–2008 averaged; NYC DOHMH neighborhood population estimates, 2004–2008 averaged; New York State Department of Health, Cancer Registry, 2002–2006 averaged.

#### WHY ARE BLACK AND POOR NEW YORKERS DYING MORE OFTEN FROM CANCER THAN OTHERS?

A risk factor is anything that increases a person's chance of getting a disease. Blacks and those living in low-income NYC neighborhoods tend to have more risk factors that may increase their chances of getting cancer and dying from the disease. The reasons for this are complex and may involve a number of things such as increased exposure to stress, poor access and low-quality healthcare, and higher rates of obesity and other chronic conditions that may worsen cancer treatment outcomes.

# HOW YOU CAN I REDUCE MY BREAST CANCER RISK

Women may reduce their risk of getting breast cancer by engaging in healthy behaviors like *maintaining a healthy body weight, being physically active, breastfeeding, limiting alcohol intake, and avoiding tobacco*. In addition, all women 40 years and older should be screened for breast cancer via mammography every one to two years.



**Be active** and get 30-60 minutes of exercise at least five days per week. **Shape Up** is a free, year-round fitness program for adults sponsored by the NYC Health Department. **Shape Up** is offered at community locations throughout the city. Call 311 for more information.



Eat fruits and vegetables to achieve and **maintain a healthy body weight**. NYC farmers' markets provide an opportunity for residents to buy fresh and affordable fruits and vegetables. The Health Department offers two farmers' market programs – **Health Bucks** and **Stellar Farmers' Markets** – that can help residents get free or reduced priced produce. Call 311 for more information.



**Quit smoking** and limit other unhealthy habits – like too much alcohol – that may increase your risk of getting cancer. NYC has Quit Smoking programs in each borough. For more information, call 311 or visit NYC Quits at [www.nyc.gov/nycquits.com](http://www.nyc.gov/nycquits.com).



**Get checked. MAMMOGRAMS CAN HELP SAVE LIVES.** Women ages 40 and older should be screened for breast cancer with a mammogram every one to two years. For more information about breast cancer and where to get checked call 311.