

Health of Older New Yorkers

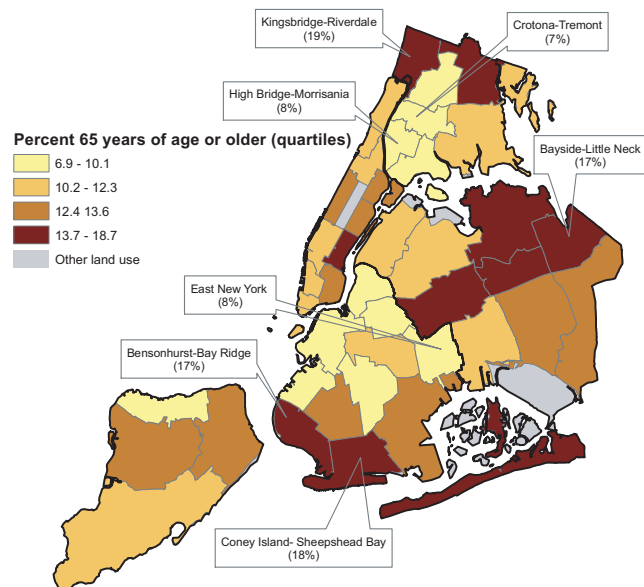
New Yorkers are living longer than ever before. Increased life expectancy combined with the aging of the “baby boomer” generation will result in an unprecedented number of older New Yorkers. In 2000, there were nearly one million New Yorkers 65 years of age or older. By 2030, this number is projected to be 1.35 million.

Because the burden of illness increases with age, public health efforts are increasingly needed to promote healthy aging, manage chronic illness, reduce injury risk and help older adults maintain their independence. This report describes older New Yorkers (65 years of age or older) and their current health status. Recommendations for improving older adult health are on page four.

Number of older adults in New York City has increased 67% since 1950

- In 2007, there were about 1,013,000 (12%) older New Yorkers compared with 605,000 (8%) in 1950.
- The majority of older New Yorkers (61%) were women.*
- The percent of older New Yorkers varied by race/ethnicity, with 18% of white, 11% of black, 9% of Asian and 8% of Hispanic New Yorkers ages 65 years or older, as well as by neighborhood (see map).*
- Three quarters of older New Yorkers (75%) were retired or homemakers, 16% were still employed and 9% were unemployed or unable to work.**
- More than one-quarter (27%) of older New Yorkers lived below 100% of the federal poverty level.**
- While 44% of older New Yorkers were married or partnered, most were not; 31% were widowed, 15% were divorced/separated and 10% were never married.**

Percent of New Yorkers ages 65 years or older by New York City neighborhood, 2007*



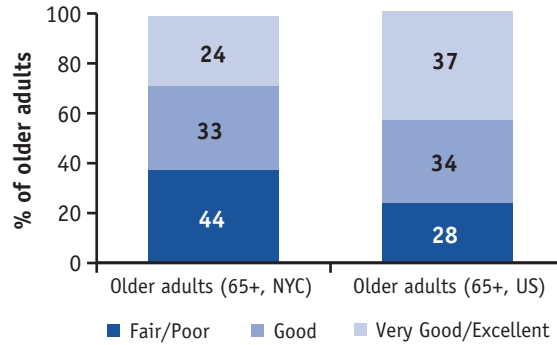
Sources: * NYC DOHMH neighborhood population estimates, modified from US Census Bureau, Vintage population estimates, 2007
 ** NYC CHS 2007

This report is based on the 2007 New York City Community Health Survey, in which adults age 18 years and older representing every neighborhood in New York City were interviewed by telephone on their health. For full survey details, see: nyc.gov/health/survey. This report presents data for older New Yorkers who reside in households, except for population data and data on falls which include all older New Yorkers. About 4% of older New Yorkers resided in nursing homes in the year 2000. Other data sources include: New York City Department of City Planning; United States Census Bureau; CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS); NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, Bureau of Vital Statistics; NYS Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System (SPARCS).

Older adults in New York City are less likely to report being in very good or excellent health than older adults in the US

- In 2007, older New Yorkers were less likely to report being in very good or excellent health (24%) compared with older adults in the US (37%).
- Older Hispanic New Yorkers were less likely to report being in very good or excellent health (12%) than older white (29%) and older black New Yorkers (21%).
- Older New Yorkers living on incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level were less likely to report being in very good or excellent health (13%) compared with the wealthiest older New Yorkers (46%).

Self-reported health among older adults: NYC and US



Sources: NYC CHS 2007; US BRFSS 2007

Social isolation includes having limited contact with friends or relatives; few adults to talk with about private matters; and few people to call on for help. People who are socially isolated may be at greater risk for poorer health or even death during times of extreme heat or cold and emergencies. In 2007, about 140,000 older New Yorkers (17%) were at risk for social isolation.

Older adults in New York City are similar to older adults in the US on many health indicators, but are less likely to receive vaccinations

- Similar to older adults nationally, more than one-half of older New Yorkers have high blood pressure (58%). High blood pressure is more common among older black (72%) and older Hispanic New Yorkers (63%) than older white New Yorkers (51%).
- The prevalence of diabetes is higher among older New Yorkers (23%) than older adults in the US (20%). Similar to high blood pressure, diabetes is more common among older black and Hispanic New Yorkers than older white New Yorkers (34% and 31%, respectively, vs. 17%).
- While older New Yorkers and older adults nationwide had similar rates of colon and breast cancer screening, older New Yorkers were less likely to get vaccinated against the flu (55% vs. 70%) or pneumonia (48% vs. 65%).

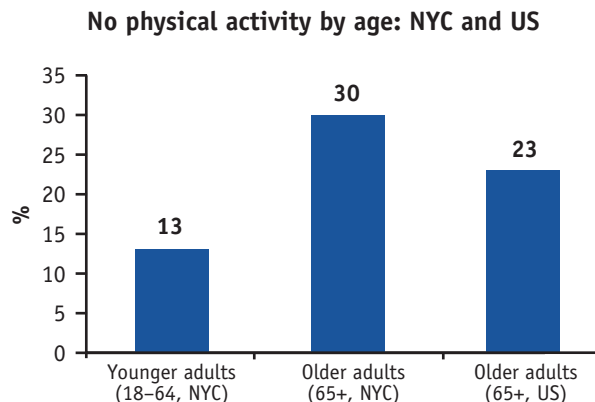
	Older Adults (NYC) %	Older Adults (US) %
Illness burden		
High blood pressure	58	58
Diabetes	23	20
Preventive care and screening		
Ever receive colonoscopy**	69	68
Females receive mammogram past 2 years*	78	79
Ever receive pneumonia vaccine*	48	65
Receive flu shot or spray in past year	55	70

* US data includes sigmoidoscopy.
Sources: NYC CHS 2007; US BRFSS 2007 and * NYC CHS 2006; US BRFSS 2006

Older adults in New York City are more likely to report no physical activity compared with older adults in the US

- In 2007, older adults in NYC were more likely to report no physical activity (30%) compared with younger adults in New York (13%) and older adults in the US (23%).
- Older women in NYC were more likely to report no physical activity (33%) compared with older men (25%).

Source: NYC CHS 2007; BRFSS 2007
 New York City adults were asked about their levels of leisure-time activities.

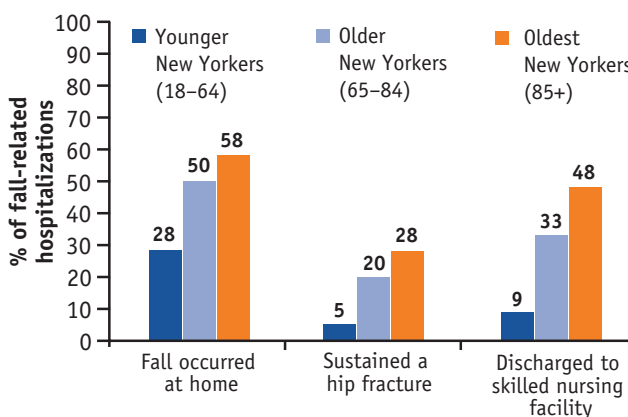


Physical activity recommendations for older adults. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that older adults do: at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise per week. In addition, older adults should engage in muscle-strengthening activities involving all muscle groups on two or more days per week. Older adults with chronic conditions should be as active as their abilities and conditions allow. Examples of exercise include: walking, swimming, dancing, carrying groceries or laundry, stretching, and tai chi. For more information, visit health.gov/PAGuidelines.

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death and hospitalization among older New Yorkers

- In 2006, older New Yorkers accounted for more than two-thirds of all adult fall-related deaths (68% of 402)* and hospitalizations (65% of 27,326).
- Fall-related death rates were similar for older men and women (32 and 24 per 100,000).* However, older woman had a higher fall-related hospitalization rate than older men (2,084 vs. 1,330 per 100,000).
- Hospitalization rates due to falls among the oldest New Yorkers, ages 85 years or older, were more than three times higher than New Yorkers ages 65 to 84 years (4,592 vs. 1,304 per 100,000).
- Falls were more likely to happen at home among older adults, and the severity of fall-related consequences increased with age. Among NYC's oldest adults hospitalized with a fall-related injury, more than one quarter fractured a hip (28%) and nearly half were discharged to a skilled nursing facility (48%).

NYC's oldest adults are at greatest risk of losing independence after a fall-related hospitalization



Sources: NYS SPARCS, 2006 (updated Aug 2007); *NYC Vital Statistics, 2006.

Recommendations

It's never too early or too late to take steps towards healthy aging.

- Physical activity is important at all ages to maintain a healthy heart and strong muscles and to promote balance to reduce falls. Exercising at younger ages can promote good health in later years.
- Plan your health care in advance. The best way to ensure your health care wishes are followed, should you become unable to decide for yourself, is to have Advanced Directives that include a Health Care Proxy. Call 311 and ask for a Health Care Proxy form.

Older New Yorkers should talk with their health care providers about:

- Annual vision exams, cancer screenings, vaccinations, and general physical and mental health care;
- Beginning or continuing an exercise program that improves muscle strength and balance; and
- Risks associated with taking multiple medications.

Health care providers should help patients lead healthy lives as they age.

- Recommend appropriate vaccinations, exercise programs, and screening for cancers, depression, vision, and hearing.
- Review medications for possible side effects or interactions.
- Conduct a Falls Risk Assessment: www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/Fallsmaterial.html.
- For more information, read the City Health Information report "Age-friendly Primary Care" at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/chi/chi28-8.pdf>.

New Yorkers should advocate for and create safe environments for older adults.

- Older adults and family members should check homes for possible fall hazards. Remove tripping hazards such as rugs or clutter.
- Building owners and managers should create safer environments to prevent falls by making changes such as smoothing out uneven surfaces, adding handrails to walkways and stairways, and providing adequate lighting.
- Everyone should check on older relatives, friends and neighbors, especially during times of extreme weather to make sure they are comfortable and safe.

Join one of New York City's 281 community-based senior centers.

- Senior centers offer a free nutritious meal and opportunities to meet fellow peers.
- Tai Chi, blood pressure screenings and walking clubs are examples of the health and wellness programming offered at senior centers.
- Call 311 or visit nyc.gov/aging to locate the nearest senior center.

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