Recommendations

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- 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.

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- Annual vision exams, cancer screenings, vaccinations, and general physical and mental health care;
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Health care providers should help patients lead healthy lives as they age.

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- 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.

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New York City Vital Signs

A data report from the New York City Health Department

March 2010

Volume 8, No. 4

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.

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, 9% of Asian and 8% of Hispanic New Yorkers ages 65 years or older, as well as by neighborhood (see map).
- Women.

Sources: * NYC DOHMH neighborhood population estimates, modified from US Census Bureau, Vintage population estimates, 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).

For more New York City health data and publications, visit My Community’s Health at nyc.gov/health/mycommunityshealth.
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%).

Sources: NYC CHS 2007; 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%).

### Illness burden

#### Older Adults (NYC) %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illness burden</th>
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#### Preventive care and screening

- Ever receive colonoscopy**     | 69 vs. 68         |
- Females receive mammogram past 2 years* | 78 vs. 79 |
- Ever receive pneumonia vaccine* | 48 vs. 65        |
- Receive flu shot or spray in past year | 55 vs. 70        |


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 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%).

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% of fall-related hospitalizations by age

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<th>Older adults (65+, NYC)</th>
<th>Oldest New Yorkers (85+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall occurred at home</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustained a hip fracture</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discharged to skilled nursing facility</td>
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Self-reported health among older adults: NYC and US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Fair/Poor</th>
<th>Good</th>
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