EXERCISE AND GOOD NUTRITION

Brooklyn has the greatest number of adults who reported not exercising within the past month, compared to any other county in the nation.

Not eating right or getting enough exercise means that you have a greater risk of developing serious health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and some types of cancer. Small increases in physical activity and healthy eating can help put you on the road to better health.

Are You Increasing Your Risk?

Poor eating habits and lack of exercise are unhealthy behaviors that often begin in childhood or adolescence. Studies show that overweight teens have a greater chance of becoming overweight or obese adults. These behaviors can increase your risk for serious health problems and lead to unhealthy weight gain. Taking part in healthy behaviors, like getting good nutrition and proper exercise, is something that you can decide for yourself and control.

Poor Diet
A recent survey among high school students nationwide shows that they are not eating properly. In Brooklyn, 75 percent of the students polled said that they did not eat the recommended five daily servings of fruits and vegetables in the past week.

Too Much TV
Time spent in front of the TV is time not spent doing sports or other physical activity. Sixty percent of Brooklyn high school students surveyed said they watch three or more hours of TV on an average school day.

Too Little Exercise
In Brooklyn, almost 30 percent of adults reported that they did not have any exercise (outside of work) in the past month. This is the poorest result among those surveyed in New York and the rest of the country.
What You Should Know

Studies show that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables may help reduce the risk of colon cancers and other serious diseases.

Exercise improves muscle and bone strength and gives a sense of well-being.

Regular physical activity can lower high blood pressure and cholesterol, control weight, and reduce the risk of diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

A Common Sign of Inactivity and Poor Nutrition Is Unhealthy Weight

What Is Unhealthy Weight?

Body Mass Index or BMI is a way to tell whether you are overweight. For an adult, BMI greater than 25 may mean that you are overweight; BMI greater than 30 is a sign of obesity.

Are You Overweight?

To find out, locate the point where your height and weight meet in the chart below.

Calculating Your BMI

To determine your BMI or find out if you are overweight refer to the tables below.

For example, a person who weighs 220 pounds and is 6 feet 3 inches tall has a BMI of 27.5.

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\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{weight in pounds}}{\text{height in inches}^2} \times 703
\]

\[
\frac{220 \text{ lbs} \times 703}{(75 \text{ inches})^2} = 27.5
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Adult BMI and Weight Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Below 18.5</th>
<th>25.0 – 29.9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underweight</td>
<td>Overweight</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>18.5 – 24.9</th>
<th>30.0 and above</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Obese</td>
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What You Can Do

Cut down: Eat less fats and processed foods and more fruits and vegetables.

Do it together: Stock the refrigerator with healthy foods and eat family meals.

Don’t eat so fast: It takes 15 minutes or more for your brain to get the message that you are full.

Eat more fiber: Whole grain foods, lentils, and beans can help you feel full with less calories.

Start small: Set goals that work for you, like walking three times a week for 20 minutes instead of every day.

Write it down: Keep a diary of what works and what doesn’t.

For source information and more on the dangers of overweight and obesity, as well as other major health concerns facing Brooklyn, read the Brooklyn Health Reports available online at www.downstate.edu/bhr/report3.html.

Produced by the SUNY Downstate Medical Center Public Health Group. Contact Hani Nasrallah at 718-270-4519 for more information.