Latinos Living Healthy
Fact Sheet

Latino Health

In 2010 over 16% of the U.S. population was Latino/Hispanic, making up the largest minority group in the country. Hispanics have accounted for more than half of the nation’s total growth in the past decade. (http://pewhispanic.org/) Hispanics also constitute the largest group of people who do not have health insurance. As a result, Hispanics are less likely to receive routine health care or preventative services and tend to only seek medical care at the onset of chronic diseases. This leads to poorer health outcomes and higher incidence of illnesses such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease and obesity.

The Obesity Trend

Many health issues can be linked to the obesity health trend among Latinos.

- 65% of adult Hispanics are overweight or obese
- 15.1% of Latino high school students are obese (19% are overweight)

Obesity can lead to:

- Colon, esophageal & kidney cancer
- Depression, anxiety, & other mental health conditions
- Heart diseases, diabetes, & hypertension

For more information:
http://www.rwjf.org/
http://www.census.gov/
http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/
http://pewhispanic.org/
http://www.kff.org/minorityhealth/index.cfm

Health Highlights

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for Hispanics, shadowing the national trend.
- Cancer is the second leading cause of death for Hispanics.
- In 2006, Hispanics were 1.5 times as likely as non-Hispanic Whites to die from diabetes.
- While chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, homicide, and certain conditions surrounding births were not leading causes of death among the general population, rates were higher among Latinos.
- Hispanics suffer greater mortality from factors such as unintentional injuries than the population as a whole.

The barriers we face...

- Socioeconomic factors – Hispanics are disproportionately affected by poverty and unemployment, 12% of Latinos are unemployed (USDA). They face economic barriers and lack awareness of assistance programs.
- Cultural traits – Hispanic women often prioritize the health of their families and do not seek necessary medical care for themselves; lower rates of use for birth control methods which could prevent sexually transmitted diseases; “machismo” often leads men to refrain from seeking preventative screenings or necessary medical treatments.
- Language barriers – Difficulty communicating with medical professionals is a major deterrent for people with limited English proficiency. These people are often excluded from programs, experience denials of services, or receive care and services based on inaccurate or incomplete information.
- Immigration status – Fear of disclosing personal information often leads immigrant Latinos to not apply for available services. While states may require that applicants for Medicaid or SNAP (food stamps) provide their social security numbers they may be in violation of the Privacy Act of 1974 when they require non-applicants living in the household or family unit to provide theirs.
- The built environment – Many Latinos do not engage in enough physical activity to receive any health benefits. This could be related to the fact that many Latinos live in low income areas where there are fewer safe spaces to play or exercise outside.
- Food insecurity – This is the lack of access to nutritionally adequate and safe foods sufficient to support and active healthy lifestyle. “Food deserts”, or neighborhoods without grocery stores, limit the access to healthy affordable foods, such as produce, for Latinos because they are forced to shop at smaller corner stores that do not sell these items.