



# Many not eating enough fruit, vegetables; cost may be issue

A healthy diet including fruits and vegetables is important for good health.<sup>1</sup> Studies have found that eating fruits and vegetables may reduce a person's risk of getting many chronic diseases such as cancer and high blood pressure. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010*,<sup>2</sup> a joint project of the U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS), recommends that Americans make half their plate fruits and vegetables at every meal.

The **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)** asked questions about healthy eating and access to healthy foods. For details about KHIP, see below.

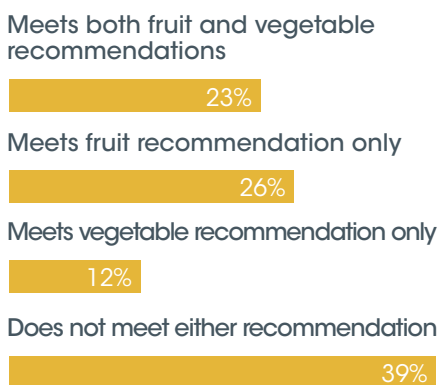
## Fewer than 4 in 10 adults report excellent or very good diet

If half the plate should be fruits and vegetables, adults would be eating at least 2 servings of

<sup>1</sup>For more information on a healthy diet, please see <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/index.html>

<sup>2</sup>For more information on the Dietary Guidelines, please visit: <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>.

### Percentage of Kentucky adults who meet dietary recommendations



fruit and 3 servings of vegetables per day. Adults in Kentucky are far short of meeting this recommendation.

In fact, many Kentucky adults recognize that they do not have a healthy diet. When asked, "In general, how healthy is your overall diet? Would you say excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?" only 4 in 10 (39%) Kentucky adults say they have an excellent or very good diet. Adults who report better general health<sup>3</sup> also tend to report better diets.

<sup>3</sup> KHIP asked, "Would you say that, in general, your health is excellent, very good, good, fair or poor?"

Fruit and vegetable consumption varies significantly by income. Only 3 in 10 adults (30%) with incomes at or below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) report an excellent or very good diet. This compares with 4 in 10 adults (36%) with incomes between 138% and 200% FPL and 5 in 10 adults (47%) with incomes above 200% FPL.<sup>4</sup>

## Only 2 in 10 meet both fruit and vegetable recommendations

Only about 2 in 10 Kentucky adults (23%) eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables each day.<sup>5</sup> An additional 3 in 10 (26%) meet only the daily fruit amount and 1 in 10 (12%) meet only the daily vegetable amount. The remaining

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<sup>4</sup> 138% of FPL in 2012 was \$31,800 for a family of four; 200% FPL is \$46,100.

<sup>5</sup> KHIP asked, "A serving of vegetables is a half cup of any vegetable (not including potatoes) or 1 cup of salad greens. In the past week, how many servings of vegetables did you eat, on average, daily?" and "A serving of fruit is defined as a half a cup of sliced fruit or one medium piece of fruit. In the past week, how many servings of fruit did you eat, on average, daily?"

These findings unless otherwise noted are from the Kentucky Health Issues Poll, funded by the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and Interact for Health. The Kentucky Health Issues Poll was conducted Oct. 25-Nov. 26, 2013, by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati.

A random sample of 1,551 adults from throughout Kentucky was interviewed by telephone. This included 951 landline interviews and 600 cell phone interviews with cell phone users. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to  $\pm 2.5\%$ . There are other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects that can introduce error or bias. For more information about the Kentucky Health Issues Poll, please visit [www.healthy-ky.org](http://www.healthy-ky.org) or [www.interactforhealth.org/kentucky-health-issues-poll](http://www.interactforhealth.org/kentucky-health-issues-poll).

4 in 10 adults (39%) do not meet either recommendation.

Interestingly, 4 in 10 adults (38%) who report excellent or very good health do not meet either dietary recommendation. The 2013 Ohio Health Issues Poll (OHIP) reported similar findings.<sup>6</sup>

### **Most Kentucky adults report easy access to healthy foods, but cost an issue for many**

The majority of Kentucky adults (81%) agree with the statement “It is easy to purchase healthy

foods in my neighborhood such as whole grain foods, low-fat options, and fruits and vegetables.” However, easy access to healthy food is not uniform across Kentucky. In Appalachian counties in the eastern part of the state, 2 in 10 adults (20%) disagree with the statement, compared with 1 in 10 adults (10%) in non-Appalachian counties.

Half of Kentucky adults (50%) say the cost of fruits and vegetables where they typically shop is fair or poor, while only 19% say the cost is excellent or very good and 30% say the cost is good.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.interactforhealth.org/upl/OHIP\\_HealthyEating\\_FINAL2.pdf](https://www.interactforhealth.org/upl/OHIP_HealthyEating_FINAL2.pdf)