

State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2009

North Carolina Action Guide

The *State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2009* for the first time provides information on North Carolina's fruit and vegetable (F&V) consumption and policy and environmental support.

North Carolina's state-specific information is reported for F&V behavioral indicators and policy and environmental indicators. The behavioral indicators are derived from objectives for F&V consumption outlined in *Healthy People 2010*, a framework for the nation's health priorities, and data is from CDC-supported state health surveillance systems. The policy and environmental indicators are from multiple data sources and measure several aspects of a state's ability to support the consumption of F&V.

Fruits and vegetables, as part of a healthy diet, are important for optimal child growth, weight management, and chronic disease prevention. Supporting increased F&V access, availability, and reduced price are key public health strategies to help increase F&V consumption and thus improve nutrition.

This action guide summarizes North Carolina's data and provides potential actions that state leaders, coalitions, community-based organizations, and professionals can take alone or in partnership to support residents' nutrition.

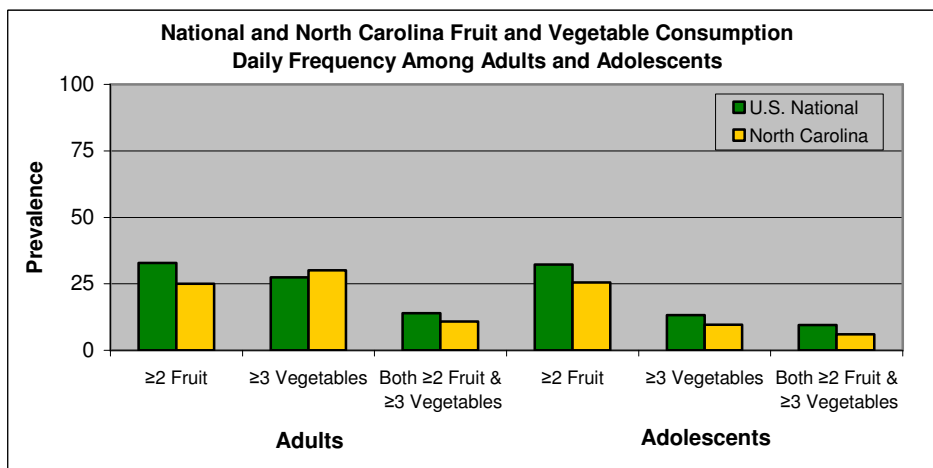


Behavioral Indicators

The national *Healthy People 2010* fruit objective and vegetable objective are to increase the proportion of Americans aged at least 2 years consuming daily ≥ 2 servings of fruit to 75% and ≥ 3 servings of vegetables to 50%, respectively.

In this report, North Carolina's progress towards the fruit objective, vegetable objective, and both fruit and vegetable objectives are assessed from the F&V survey items included as a 6-item frequency screener in the 2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (adults aged ≥ 18 years) and the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (adolescents in grades 9-12).

National and North Carolina data are presented.



Policy and Environmental Indicators



Promote the Availability of Healthier Food Retail in Communities

Strategies and policies to improve the food environment can aid fruit and vegetable access, availability, and affordability. The indicators below represent key areas in which policy and environmental support can help make changes in people's community access to fruits and vegetables.

Indicator	North Carolina Data	National Data
• Percentage of census tracts that have healthier food retailers located within the tract or within 1/2 mile of tract boundaries	74.2%	72.0%
• State-level policy for healthier food retail	No	8 states
• Farmers markets per 100,000 state residents	1.6 / 100,000	1.7 / 100,000
• Percentage of farmers markets that accept electronic benefits transfer (EBT)	1.4%	7.6%
• Percentage of farmers markets that accept WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program coupons	4.7%	28.2%

Potential Action Items

- Provide financial and nonfinancial incentives to food retailers to open new stores and/or to offer healthier food and beverage choices including fruits and vegetables at existing stores in areas with few healthy food options.^{1,2}
- Provide support for farmers markets to purchase wireless electronic benefit transfer (EBT) devices to make it possible for them to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) and WIC Program EBT cards.²
- Engage in outreach and education to encourage residents of lower-income neighborhoods and SNAP and WIC recipients to use farmers markets and farm stands where they are available.²
- Improve zoning and transportation policies to make supermarkets, grocery stores, and farmers markets more accessible in communities.²

Resources:

- PolicyLink offers a tool for concerned residents, policymakers, business leaders, and advocates ideas and strategies for improving access to healthy food in underserved communities: http://www.policylink.org/site/c.lk1XLbMNJrE/b.5137405/k.6042/Healthy_Food_Retailing.htm
- Planning for Healthy Places is a program of the Public Health Law & Policy at the Public Health Institute. This resource provides Model General Plan Language to Protect and Expand Farmers Markets: <http://www.healthyplanning.org/modelpolicies.html>
- Leadership for Healthy Communities Action Strategies Toolkit is a guide for local and state leaders working to create healthy communities and prevent childhood obesity: <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/20090508lhcactionstrategiestoolkit.pdf>





Promote the Availability of Healthier Foods and Nutrition Services in Schools

Schools are uniquely positioned to model and reinforce healthful eating behaviors such as increasing knowledge of and access to fruits and vegetables on the school campus and at school-related activities. Schools have the ability to provide fruits and vegetable not only to youth, but also to teachers, other school staff, parents and community members.

Indicator	North Carolina Data	National Data
• Percentage of middle and high schools that offer fruits (not juice) and non-fried vegetables as competitive foods	25.2%	20.9%*
• State-level policy for Farm-to-School programs	No	21 states

*Average percentage across participating states.

Potential Action Items

- Establish nutrition standards for competitive foods as part of school wellness policies. These standards could require that fruits and vegetables are available and affordable whenever food is offered to students.³
- Support policies at all levels that address the availability of competitive foods in schools.³
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation and enforcement of nutrition standards.³
- Support Farm-to-School initiatives and policies as a way for schools to purchase food from local farms.¹

Resources:

- Council of State Governments, School Wellness Policies, Legislator Policy Brief provides information on the need for legislator intervention in school wellness policies: www.healthystates.csg.org/NR/rdonlyres/C87EB28D-B2F6-4399-B1BD-BC5617940019/0/SchoolWellnessPoliciesFINAL.pdf
- CDC resource that provides Local Wellness Policy Tools & Resources for school setting: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/healthtopics/wellness.htm>
- National Farm to School organization site provides how-to guides, policies, and information about collaborating organizations: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/>



Encourage Food System Support

A systems approach to food considers the many factors involved in getting fruits and vegetables from farm to consumer including aspects of food production, processing, and distribution. Also included in a food system approach are the participants in that system, including farmers, processors, industries, workers, governments, retailers, institutional purchasers, communities, and consumers.

Indicator	North Carolina Data	National Data
• Percentage of cropland acreage harvested for fruits and vegetables	3.3%	2.5%
• State-level Food Policy Council	No	20 states
• Local Food Policy Councils	0	59 across states

Potential Action Items

- Organize a Food Policy Council or similar coalition to promote environment and policy change initiatives for healthy eating.¹
- Adopt policies that encourage the production, distribution, or procurement of food from local farms.¹

Resources:

- Building local food systems: A planning guide. Rochester, NY: Center for Popular Research, Education and Policy and New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, 2006. http://www.nysawg.org/pdf/Local_Food_Planning_Guide_v2.pdf
- The North American Food Policy Council site is a component of the Community Food Security Coalition. Their website lists those councils mandated or managed by state governments, a sample budget, how-to guides, and suggested policies: <http://www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/>

General Resources

CDC is part of the National Fruit and Vegetable Program (<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/>) which aims to increase the consumption of F&V for improved public health. The website highlights a number of tools, recipes, and other resources.

The *State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2009* including data sources, national and state-by-state data is available at: <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/indicatorreport>

The CDC Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity website provides many resources that support states and communities to make changes through policy and environmental approaches for healthy eating. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdpnp/dnpao>

For more information and feedback, contact indicator_reportFV@cdc.gov

References

1. Keener D., Goodman, K., Lowry, A., Zaro, S., & Kettel Khan, L. (2009). Recommended community strategies and measurements to prevent obesity in the United States: Implementation and measurement guide. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/community_strategies_guide.pdf
2. IOM (Institute of Medicine). 2009. *Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <http://www.iom.edu/Object.File/Master/72/800/local%20govts%20obesity%20report%20brief%20FINAL%20for%20web.pdf>
3. IOM (Institute of Medicine). 2007. *Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way Toward Healthier Youth*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/30181/42502.aspx>

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