

Rate of Americans With Poor Diets Decreased Since 1999

Dietary improvements were most notable among Latinos, women and people with higher levels of education.

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American [diets](#) have improved slightly over the last two decades, but [food insecurity](#) issues remain steady, according to a new study published in the [Annals of Internal Medicine](#).

A poor diet can result in obesity and increase one's risk for various health conditions, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke and some types of cancers. In fact, more than a million Americans die of diet-related diseases each year, according to the [Food and Drug Administration](#).

These health conditions affect some people more than others. For example, Latinos living in the United States are [about 17% more likely](#) to have [type 2 diabetes](#) compared with non-Hispanic white people.

For the new study, Tufts University researchers analyzed data on 51,700 people between 1999 and 2020, according to a [university news release](#). Researchers used the [American Heart Association's diet score](#) to measure participants' diets.

The ideal diet included a higher intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, and a poor diet consisted of sugary beverages, processed foods, sodium and saturated fat.

The proportion of adults with poor dietary quality decreased from 48.8% to 37.4% during the study period. Those with intermediate diet quality increased from 50.6% to 51.1%. Adults consuming an ideal diet slightly improved but remain low, from 0.66% to 1.58%.

Improvements in diet were greatest among Latino adults, women, younger adults and those with higher education, food security, income and access to private health insurance, according to the

news release. In contrast, improvements were lower among older adults, men, Black adults and those with lower education, food insecurity, lesser income and non-private health insurance.

“We face a national nutrition crisis, with continuing climbing rates of obesity and type 2 diabetes,” said Dariush Mozaffarian, MD, the study’s senior author. “These diseases afflict all Americans, but especially those who are socioeconomically and geographically vulnerable. We must address nutrition security and other social determinants of health, including housing, transportation, fair wages and structural racism, to address the human and economic costs of poor diets.”

To read more, click [#Diet](#) or [#Food Insecurity](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[Obesity on the Rise Among NYC Latino Students](#),” “[Avocados Linked to Lower Diabetes Risk in Mexican Women](#)” and “[Los Angeles Survey Highlights Health Inequities in Latinos](#).”