

**Focus Groups to**

# **Listen & Learn**

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# Presenter Disclosures

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“No relationships to disclose”



# Barriers to Healthy Weight for Low-Income Women: Los Angeles Latinas and African American Women

- Comparing Results from Research 2007-2008
- Focus Groups conducted in WIC Centers
- Los Angeles County, CA



# Why are We Addressing Obesity in Latinas and African American Women?

- In LA, women 18-44 yrs, more than ½ are overweight or obese
  - Latinas - 53.6%
  - African Americans – 59.4%
- Disproportionately effected by obesity
- Face unique barriers .



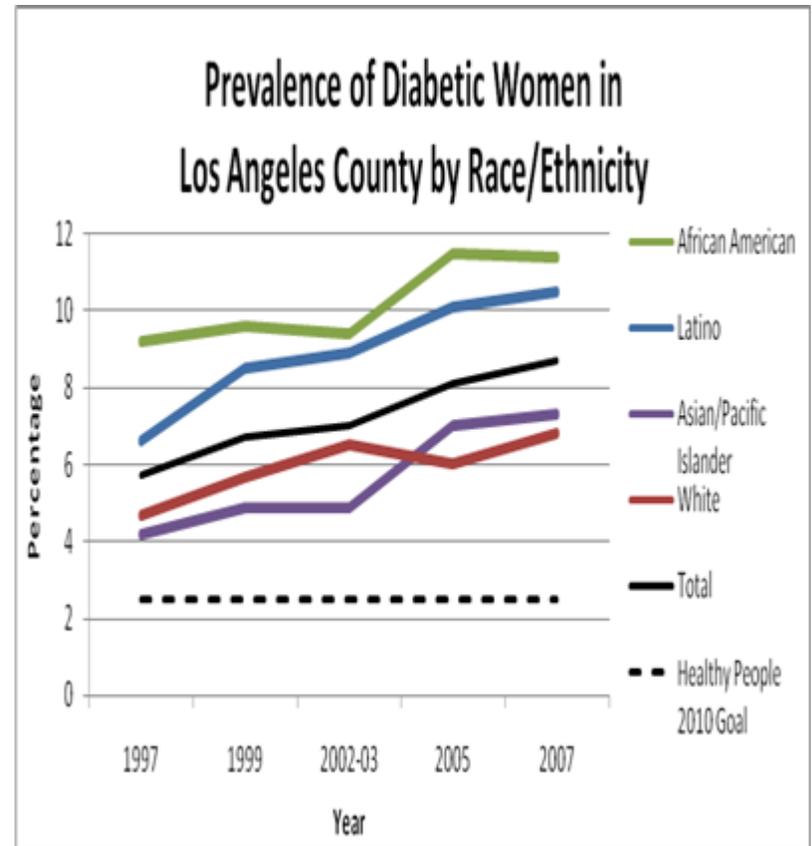
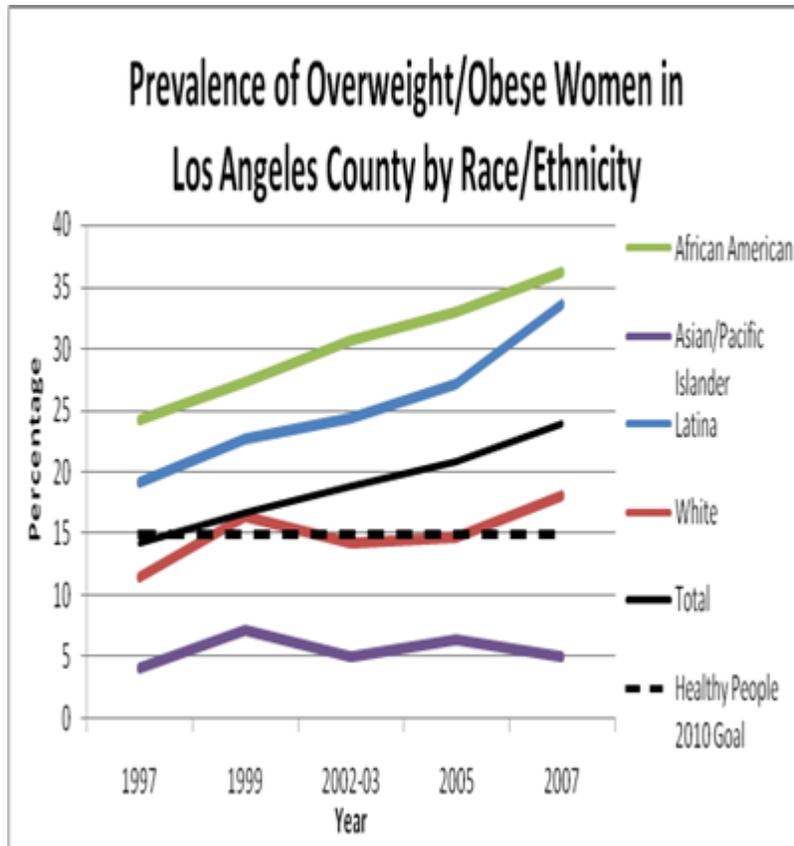
# Health implications of overweight/obesity

Directly linked to:

- Coronary heart disease and diabetes
- Adverse perinatal health outcomes



# Rise in Diabetes Mirrors Rise in Obesity



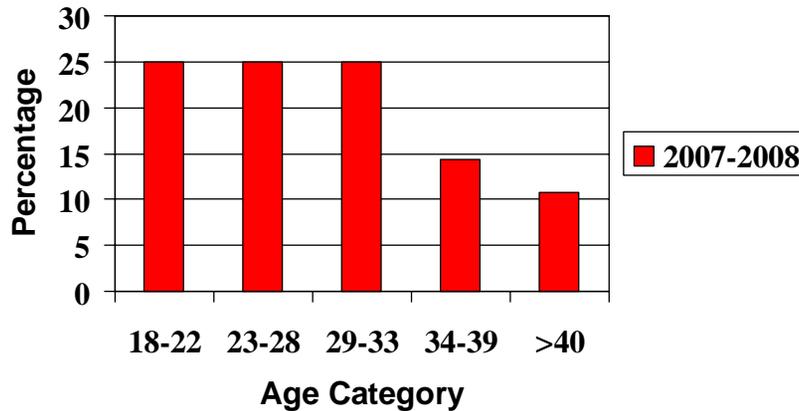
# Comparison Between African Americans and Latino women

- 2007 & 2008 Data

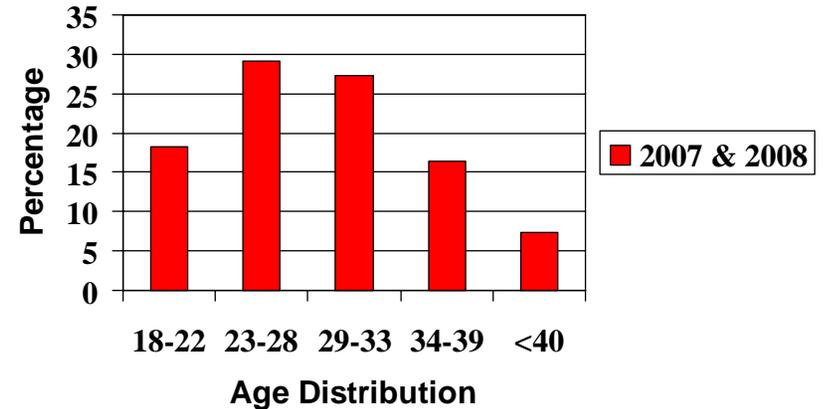


# Age

2007-2008 African American Ages



2007 & 2008 Latino Age

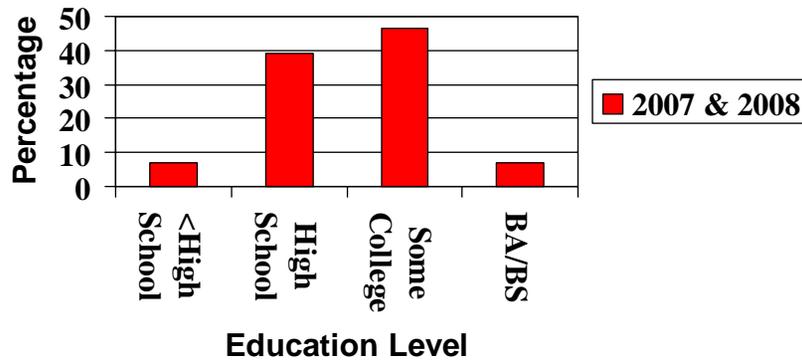


- 50% of African American women were under 28 yrs of age
- 47.3% of Latino women were under 28 yrs of age

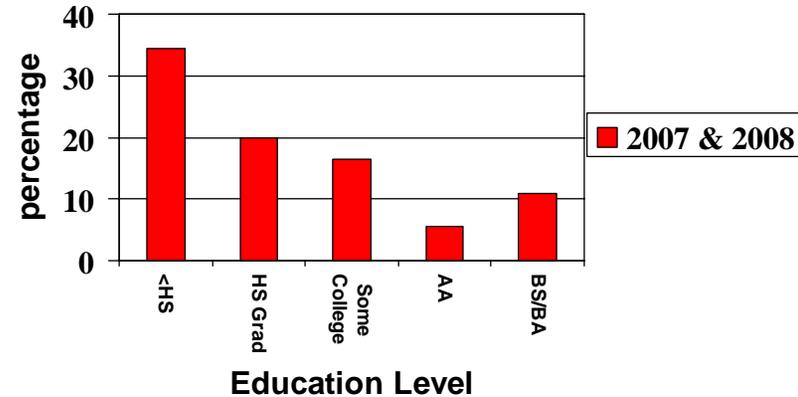


# Education Level

2007 & 2008 African American Education Levels



2007 & 2008 Latino Education Level

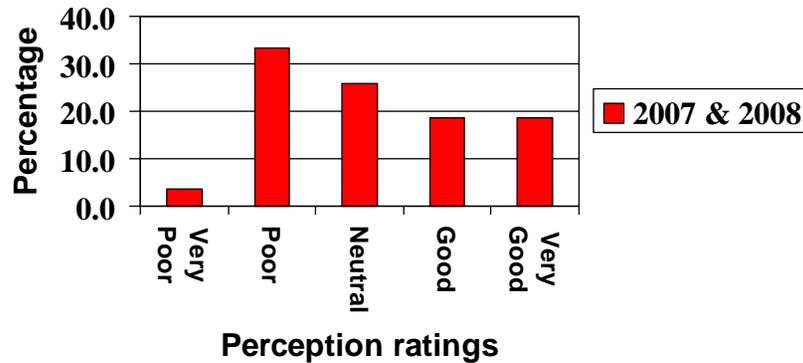


- 7% African American women less than a High School education
- 35% of Latino Women had less than a High School education



# Safety Perception

2007-2008 African American Safety Perceptions



2007 & 2008 Latino Safety perception

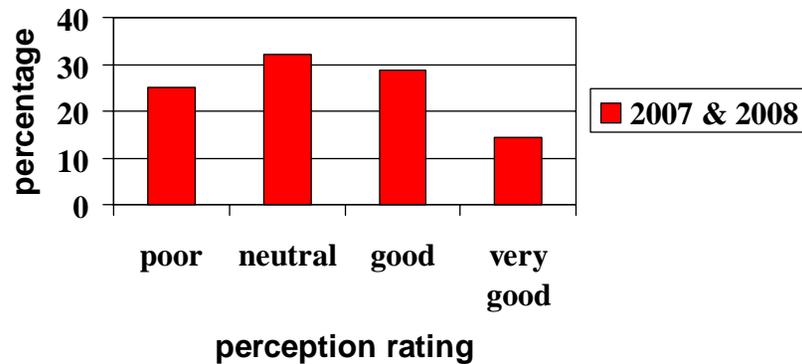


- 37% of African Americans rated their safety as poor
- 30% of Latinos rated their safety as being poor

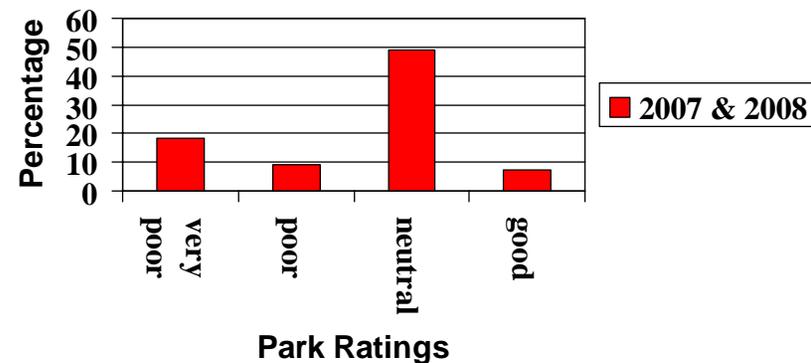


# Quality of Parks

2007 & 2008 African American Parks perception



2007 & 2008 Latino Parks Perception

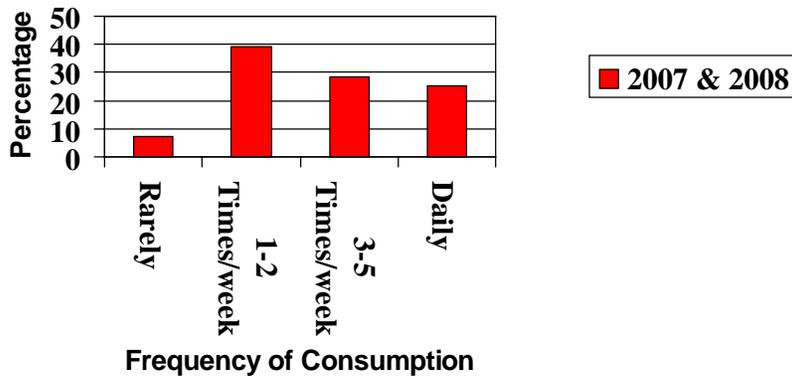


- 25% of African Americans thought that the parks were poor
- 27% of Latinos thought that the parks were poor

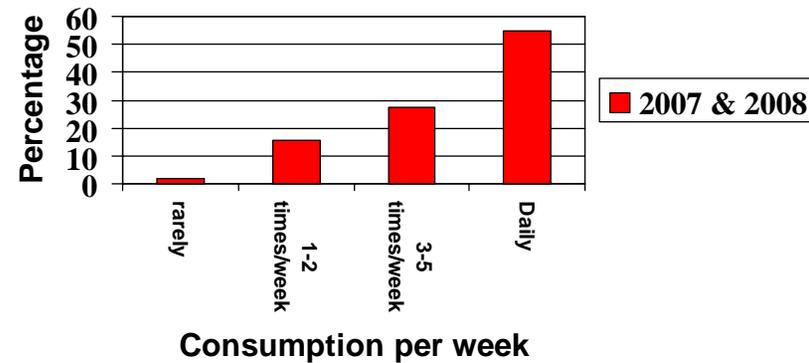


# Fruit Consumption

## African American Fruit Consumption Per Week



## 2007 & 2008 Latino Fruit Consumption

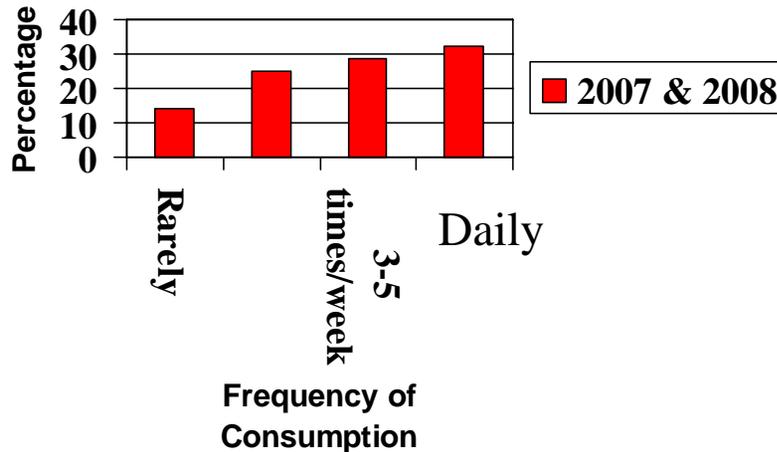


- 25% of African Americans eat fruit daily
- 55% of Latinos eat fruit daily

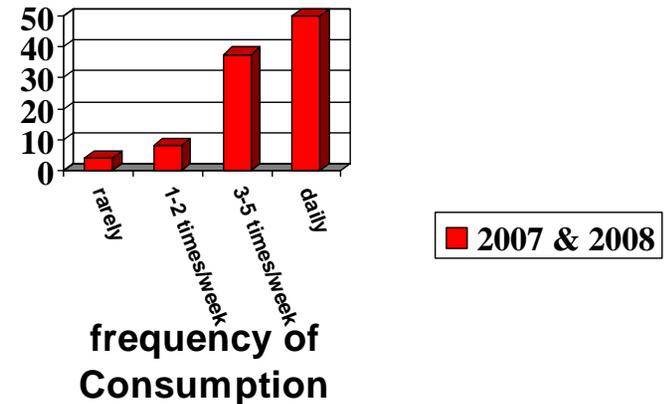


# Vegetable Consumption

2007 & 2008 African American Vegetable Consumption



2007 & 2008 Latino Vegetable consumption

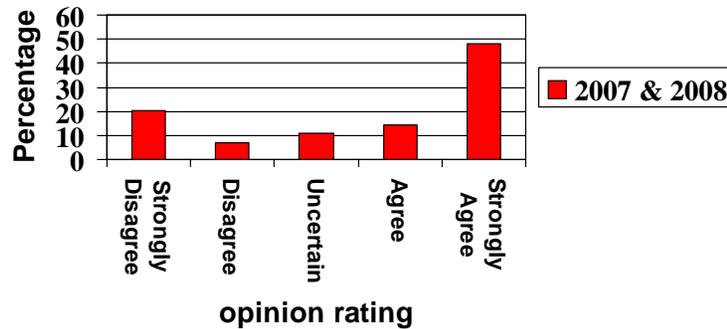


- 32% of African American eat vegetables daily
- 50% of Latinos eat vegetables daily

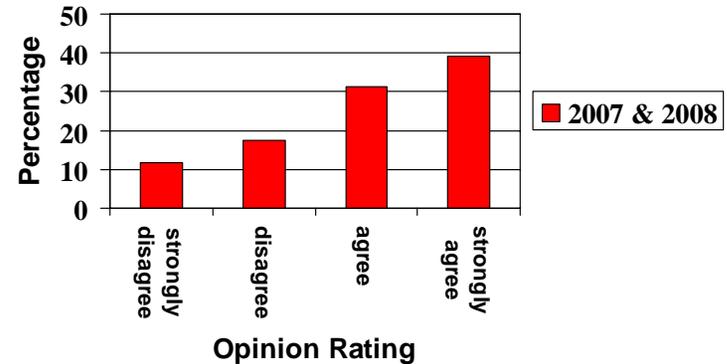


# Body Image

2007 & 2008 African American Body Image



2007 & 2008 Latino Body Image



- 67% of African American women are satisfied with their body weight
- 71% of Latinas are satisfied with their body weight



# How Are We Addressing This Problem?

- Bringing together stakeholders to share knowledge and expertise.
- Prioritize **messaging** to promote healthy weight among women of reproductive age.
  - For women
  - For providers



# Understanding Barriers Low-Income Latino and African American Women Face Focus Groups and Literature Review

- Although knowledge is high, various barriers exist:
  - High cost of healthy food vs. fast food
  - Access to healthy foods
  - Time barriers to eating healthy and exercising
  - Neighborhood safety and lack of parks & rec.
  - Cultural preferences for full figures and for high-fat foods



# Creating and testing Messages:

- Messages created recognized barriers and offered solutions
- The brochure tested at WIC clinics.
- After a week of sessions, the brochure was modified to reflect participants' feedback.
- Revised brochure used in next round of focus groups.



# Format for Brochure

- Check-list – reminder of 10 evidence-based strategies
- Barriers listed
- Solutions suggested



**I know what is healthy...  
but, are my habits healthy?**

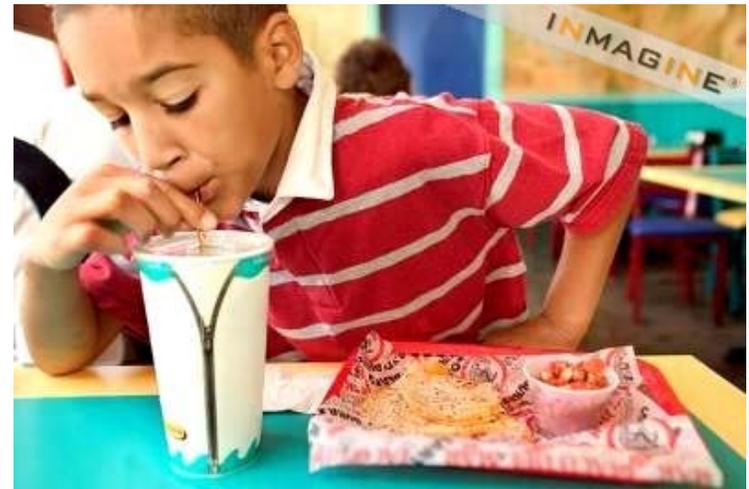
*DO I...*

	Yes	No
Drink low-fat or skim milk soy milk, if lactose intolerant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase vegetable servings to 4 or more a day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eat 2 or more servings of fruits each day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limit butter, lard, and shortening..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoid ingredients, such as high fructose corn syrup.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limit TV time to less than 3 hours per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limit sodas and juices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read food labels.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Include lots of fiber by eating whole grains.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take a multi-vitamin with folic acid every day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eat breakfast every day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you checked "No" on any of the  
above, see the next page.

# Barriers identified 2007 Focus Groups: High Cost of Healthy Food

- Most African American did not see cost of healthy food as a true barrier to eating healthy.
- Latinas agree.
- However, both complained that healthy fast-food options are more expensive than less-healthy fast-food options.



## Barriers identified 2007 Focus Groups:

# Availability of Healthy Food

- Access perceived reality for many African Americans.
- African Americans reported lower availability of produce in neighborhood than Latinos.
- For both groups, those relying on public transportation face this barrier more commonly.



## Barriers identified 2007 Focus Groups:

# Why not Cooking?

- Common themes in both groups were that the children did not like certain healthy foods
- That each family member wanted something different.
- Latinas saw mother cook, but didn't learn.
- African American mothers didn't cook, not enough time.
- African American women taste for fast food was formed in childhood.



## Barriers identified 2007 Focus Groups:

### Why not exercising?

- Both groups - very little exercise.
- Neighborhoods not considered safe by African Americans.
- Lower ratings of parks among African Americans as compared with Latinas. This may reflect cultural variations in park usage.
- Both groups indicated this is often an excuse.



## Barriers identified 2007 Focus Groups:

# Other Barriers to Exercise:

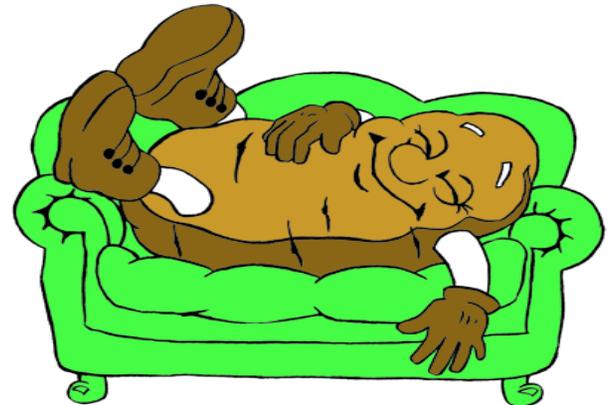
- Both groups
  - Wanted park safety
  - Needed infrastructure (such as sidewalks)
  - Gyms seen as costly and requiring transportation
- Latinas express cultural barriers to exercise relating to gender.
- African American wanted social support.



## Barriers identified 2007 Focus Groups:

### Exercise: Time & Motivation

- **Motivation** remains the biggest barrier to exercise according to participants.
- Many women expressed that they are simply **too tired** from work and children to exercise.
- High rates of **TV watching** in both Latina and African American groups.



# Looking Forward - Implications:

- Stages of Change:
  - Many women may still be in pre-contemplation
  - High levels of body satisfaction, even when women self-identified as overweight.
- Motivation and Cultural Norms:
  - What values/messages/information would move women to the next stage?
  - Where can women be reached?
- Awareness:
  - Brochure checklist was new to many women.
  - Suggests self-awareness may help to motivate.



# Looking Forward - Implications:

- Addressing convenience:
  - Eating out reality, especially for working women.
  - Educate women about the best eat-out options.
- Cooking Skills:
  - Offer classes to teach women to cook quick, convenient healthy meals that taste good.
- Social Support - Trusted Venues:
  - Help women organize exercise groups
    - worksite wellness programs
  - Cook together at church



# Major Implications

- Build upon existing activities
- Teach health consequences of overweight
- Mobilize leaders
- Improve physical environment
- Offer healthy cheap fast food
- Change culture



# Future Plans

- Continue Collaboration



- Empower
  - Listen
  - Share
- Acknowledge

- Develop Systems to Support Behavior
  - Support Health Policy



# Our partners include:

State of CA Department of  
Public Health –  
MCH/OFP

Los Angeles County  
Department of Public  
Health – many programs

Promotora Organizations

Special Interest Coalitions

Demonstration Projects

Kaiser Permanente  
California Medical  
Association

Insurance Oversight

University -UCLA

Hospitals and Clinics

WIC



# Questions?

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