

# 2023 Los Angeles County Health Survey: Key Findings for Selected Populations

The **Los Angeles County Health Survey (LACHS)** is a periodic, population-based survey that has been conducted by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) since 1997. The survey collects information from adults and children in the County on health status, health conditions, health behaviors, social determinants of health, and other topics relevant to community health. The 2023 LACHS collected information from 9,372 adults and 7,391 children. To learn more about the survey, please visit the [LACHS website](#). This brief report summarizes a few key findings from the 2023 LACHS by race and ethnicity and poverty level, specifically for Black, Latinx, and Asian adults (ages 18 years and older) and adults and children (ages 17 years and younger) living below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)<sup>1</sup> in Los Angeles County.

*Please note:* This brief report is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of findings from the 2023 LACHS, and we acknowledge that it does not encompass all the diverse populations in our County. Similarly, the graphs included are intended to illustrate select findings and do not include all racial and ethnic or income categories available in the full LACHS data. Public Health expects to release additional in-depth reports focused on specific populations and topic areas using the 2023 LACHS data in the future.

## KEY FINDINGS FOR BLACK, LATINX, AND ASIAN ADULTS (18 YEARS AND OLDER)

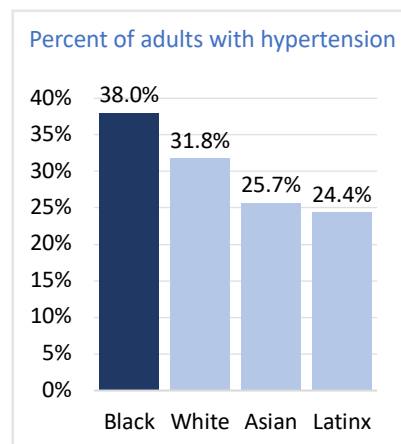
Racial and ethnic disparities in health and well-being have been well-documented, both in the United States as well as in Los Angeles County. The fundamental drivers of these differences include economic and social conditions, shaped by historically racist policies and practices and ongoing injustices, that have unfairly placed Black and Brown communities at higher risk for numerous unhealthy outcomes and behaviors.

### Black Adults

The 2023 LACHS survey revealed that Black adults face disproportionate inequities in health, access to care, housing, and economic security.

Black adults were found to experience poorer health outcomes compared to other racial and ethnic groups:

- **Hypertension:** In 2023, well over a third of Black adults (38%) reported ever having been diagnosed with hypertension, compared to about a quarter of Latinx (24.4%) and Asian (25.7%) adults.
- **Asthma:** Black adults also reported the highest rate of current asthma (10.6%) compared to all other racial and ethnic groups (except for the non-Hispanic Multiracial and Other Race group).
- **Obesity:** Almost 40% of Black adults were found to be obese in 2023, significantly higher than the rates among White (21.4%) and Asian (10.1%) adults.
- **Diabetes:** The self-reported prevalence of ever having been diagnosed with diabetes was 12.9% among Black adults in 2023, significantly higher than the reported prevalence among White adults (8.3%).



<sup>1</sup> FPL is a measure of poverty set every year by the United States Department of Health and Human Services to determine eligibility for certain programs and benefits. Individuals with annual incomes below \$13,590 and families of four with annual incomes below \$27,750 are considered to have an income below 100% FPL based on the 2022 thresholds.

These observed disparities in health outcomes among Black adults are due to inequities in the underlying conditions known to drive health and wellbeing, including unequal access to healthy food, economic insecurity, and social and interpersonal stressors, such as experiences of discrimination:

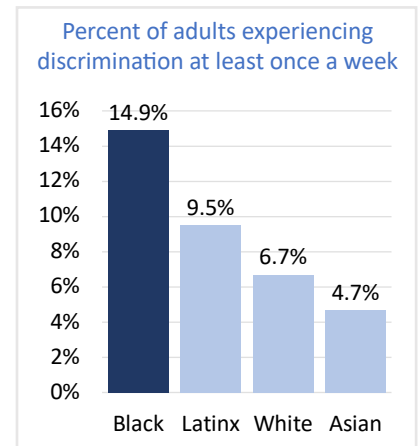
- **Nutrition insecurity:** In 2023, over a third of Black adults (34.7%) reported living in households that are nutritionally insecure, meaning that it was somewhat hard, hard, or very hard for their household to regularly eat healthy foods<sup>2</sup>

Over 1 in 3 Black adults reported living in nutritionally insecure households



in the past 12 months. This rate of nutrition insecurity was significantly higher among Black adults compared to White adults (25.4%); it was also higher than the rate among Asian adults (29.3%), although this difference was not statistically significant.

- **Housing burden:** Housing burden, defined as spending more than 30% of income on rent or mortgage, was reported by over half of Los Angeles County households (54.2%) in 2023 and was found to have increased substantially since 2018 (42.1%). Black households were observed to be disproportionately impacted; almost two-thirds of Black households (65.4%) reported being housing burdened in 2023, compared to less than half of White (42.8%) and Asian (43.1%) households.
- **Discrimination:** More than 1 in 7 Black adults (14.9%) reported experiencing discrimination at least once a week in 2023; this is more than double the percentage of White (6.7%) and Asian (4.7%) adults and also higher than the percentage of Latinx adults (9.5%) who reported experiencing discrimination at least once a week.



While the 2023 LACHS survey showed that Black adults in Los Angeles County face many challenges, it also revealed that many Black adults reported receiving needed social and emotional support at higher rates compared to some other racial and ethnic groups:

- **Social and emotional support:** Two-thirds of Black adults (67.0%) reported always or usually receiving the social and emotional support they need, compared to 56.3% of Asian adults and 57.1% of Latinx adults; however, this was still lower than the rate reported among White adults (70.5%).

### Latinx Adults

Similar to Black adults in Los Angeles County, Latinx adults were also found to experience disproportionate inequities in health, access to care, housing, and economic security in the 2023 LACHS.

*Please note:* We recognize that Latinx adults are not a monolith and come from many different nationalities, backgrounds, and races; for the purposes of this brief report, however, we have focused on the broader Latinx adult population.

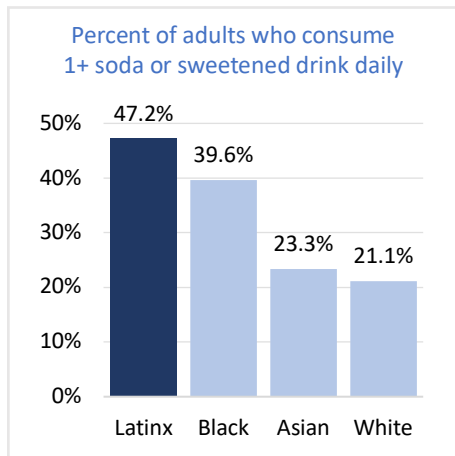
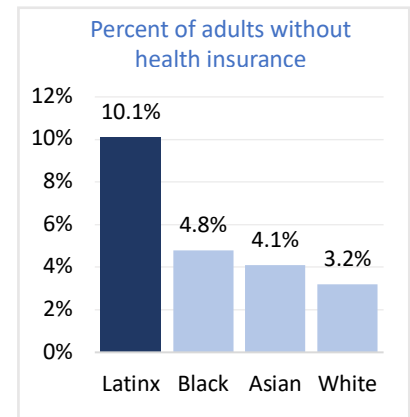
Latinx adults were found to have disproportionately worse outcomes for certain health conditions:

- **Diabetes:** In 2023, the self-reported rate of ever having been diagnosed with diabetes was the highest among Latinx adults (13.5%) compared to most other racial and ethnic groups.
- **COVID-19:** Latinx adults were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19; in 2023, almost two-thirds of Latinx adults reported ever having a COVID-19 infection (65.1%), significantly higher than the rate reported by Los Angeles County adults overall (57.6%) as well as adults from all other racial and ethnic groups (except for non-Hispanic Multiracial or Other Race).

<sup>2</sup> Healthy foods are defined as foods that support health and well-being. These foods include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, yogurt, and fish. They can be fresh, frozen, or canned, and they don't have to be organic. Less healthy foods can include foods that are highly processed and high in salt, starch, sugar, or unhealthy fats.

Latinx adults reported significant barriers to accessing healthcare:

- **Health insurance:** Though health insurance coverage has increased among Latinx adults over time, in 2023, 1 in 10 Latinx adults (10.1%) age 18 to 64 reported not having medical insurance. Also, the uninsurance rate has remained the highest among Latinx adults compared to all other racial and ethnic groups.
- **Healthcare access:** Compared to all other racial and ethnic groups, Latinx were found to have the worst healthcare access rates; more than a quarter of Latinx adults (26.5%) reported not having a regular source of care in 2023 (an increase from 19.6% in 2018), and almost a third (31.5%) reported difficulty in obtaining needed medical care.

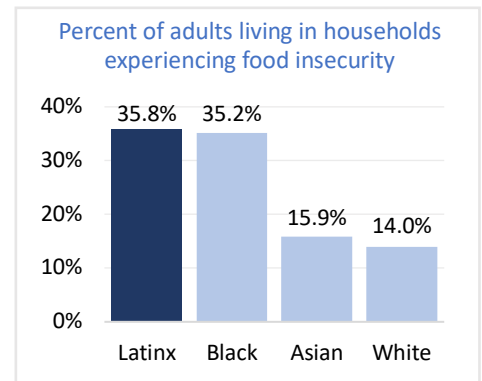


Disparities were also observed among Latinx adults in regard to certain health behaviors:

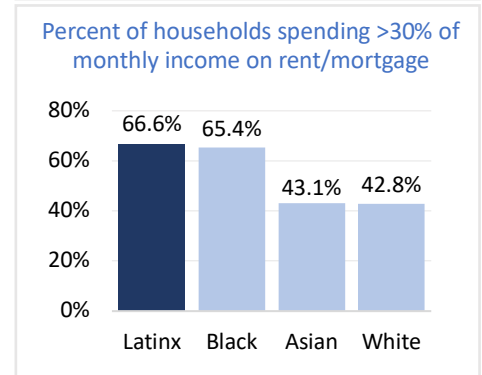
- **Soda or sugar-sweetened beverages:** Close to half of Latinx adults (47.2%) reported drinking at least one soda or sugar-sweetened beverage per day in 2023, an increase from 39% in 2015. In 2023, Latinx adults had the highest rate of soda or sugar-sweetened beverage consumption among all racial and ethnic groups except Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders (65.4%).
- **Binge drinking:** Binge drinking of alcohol<sup>3</sup> increased significantly among Los Angeles County adults between 2018 and 2023 (from 17.9% to 22.1%), with the highest binge drinking rates in 2023 reported among Latinx adults: more than a quarter of Latinx adults (25.4%) reported binge drinking in the past month, compared to 21.0% of White adults, 17.6% of Black adults, and 17.2% of Asian adults.

The health outcomes and behaviors observed among Latinx adults are largely driven by the economic and social challenges experienced by Latinx communities in Los Angeles County:

- **Food insecurity:** In 2023, over a third of Latinx adults (35.8%) reported living in households experiencing food insecurity, defined as the inability to reliably afford or access sufficient quantities of food; the Latinx rate was similar to the rate reported by Black adults (35.2%) but significantly higher than the rates reported by White adults (14.0%) and Asian adults (15.9%).
- **Housing burden:** Latinx households reported the highest rate of housing burden in 2023 (66.6%), followed by Black households (65.4%); the rate among Latinx households was significantly higher than the rate among White (42.8%) and Asian (43.1%) households.



**2 in 3 Latinx households reported being housing burdened**



- **Social and emotional support:** In 2023, Latinx adults had among the lowest rates of reporting always or usually receiving the social and emotional support they need (57.1%).

<sup>3</sup> Binge drinking is defined as drinking 4 or more drinks for females and 5 or more drinks for males on one occasion at least one time in the past month.

## Asian Adults

While Asians, as a broad demographic group, have been found to have better health outcomes for certain chronic conditions, such as asthma, obesity, or diabetes, and experience higher socioeconomic status relative to most other racial and ethnic groups in Los Angeles County, important disparities still exist.

*Please note:* we recognize that there is vast cultural and ethnic diversity in Los Angeles County's Asian communities as well as substantial variation in socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and health status by Asian subgroups; for the purposes of this brief report, however, we have focused on the broader Asian adult population.

The 2023 LACHS revealed important disparities in health outcomes and healthcare access for Asian adults:

- **High cholesterol:** More than a third of Asian adults (35.4%) reported ever having been diagnosed with high cholesterol in 2023, a significant increase from 2018 (25.6%). This 2023 rate among Asian adults was significantly higher than the rate among Latinx adults (30.0%).
- **Healthcare access:** Despite having low rates of uninsurance (4.1%), a quarter of Asian adults (24.6%) reported difficulty with obtaining needed medical care in 2023, compared to 17.0% of White adults and 19.6% of Black adults.

1 in 4 Asian adults reported difficulty with obtaining needed medical care



Asian adults were also noted to have disparities in certain mental health and emotional wellbeing outcomes:

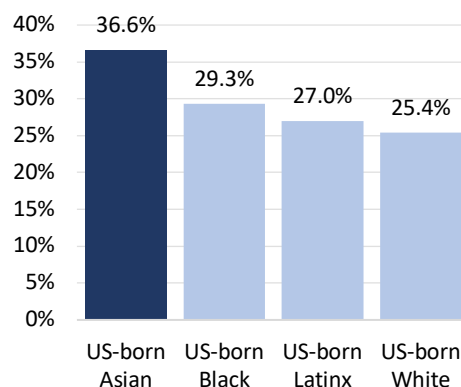
- **Suicide:** More than 1 out of 5 US-born Asian adults (21.4%) reported having serious thoughts about suicide, the highest reported rate among all racial and ethnic groups (except for the non-Hispanic Multiracial or Other Race group), and 3.8% of US-born Asian adults reported having ever attempted suicide.

1 in 5 US-born Asian adults reported having serious thoughts about suicide



- **Loneliness:** In 2023, US-born Asian adults (36.6%) also reported the highest rates of loneliness compared to any other racial and ethnic group.
- **Social and emotional support:** Only 56.3% of Asian adults reported always or usually receiving the social and emotional support they need in 2023, compared to 70.5% of White adults and 67.0% of Black adults.

Percent of adults experiencing loneliness



## KEY FINDINGS FOR ADULTS (18 YEARS+) AND CHILDREN (0-17 YEARS) LIVING BELOW 100% FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL (FPL)

People living in poverty are at disproportionately higher risk for numerous adverse health outcomes. In Los Angeles County, these risks are further exacerbated by the high cost of living, fueled in recent years by a severe shortage in affordable housing coupled with rising economic pressures. In addition to having limited resources to spend on housing, food, and healthcare, people living in poverty are often forced into under-resourced neighborhoods that are afflicted by high crime rates and an elevated pollution burden. People living in poverty can also experience chronic and toxic stress associated with economic insecurity, which can further jeopardize their health and wellbeing. Black and Brown people are disproportionately represented among those living in poverty.

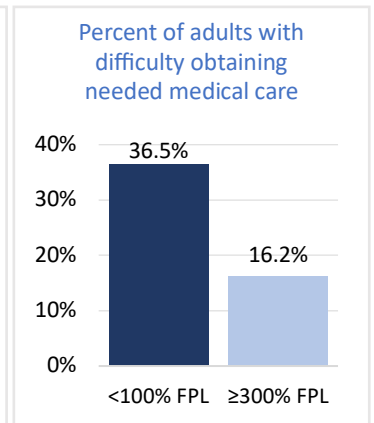
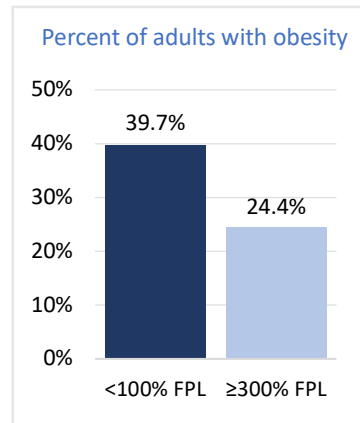
In addition, children (0-17 years) constitute the largest group of individuals living in poverty in Los Angeles County. Moreover, children living in poverty are more likely to experience poverty into adulthood, thereby perpetuating generational cycles of economic insecurity.

While households across the income spectrum may face economic insecurity and hardship in Los Angeles County, we have focused on adults and children from households in the lowest income bracket (<100% FPL) in this brief report.

### Adults Living Below 100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

Compared to adults in the highest income bracket (those living in households at or above 300% FPL), adults living in poverty were observed to have disproportionately high rates of poor health outcomes, challenges with healthcare access, and unhealthy behaviors:

- **Obesity and diabetes:** Adults in poverty reported significantly higher rates of obesity and ever having been diagnosed with diabetes compared to adults in the highest income bracket (39.7% vs 24.4% and 15.1% vs 8.1%, respectively) in 2023.
- **Regular source of care:** In 2023, almost a third (30.9%) of adults in poverty reported not having a regular source of care, almost double the rate reported by adults in the highest income bracket (17.1%) and significantly higher than the rate (20.6%) that had been reported by adults in poverty in 2018.
- **Healthcare access:** In addition, well over a third of adults in poverty reported difficulty accessing needed medical care (36.5%) in 2023, more than double the rate reported by adults in the highest income bracket (16.2%).
- **Soda or sugar-sweetened beverages and fast food:** Adults in poverty reported more frequently drinking at least one soda or sugar-sweetened beverage per day (54.5% vs 24.8%) or having fast food at least once per week (42.5% vs 33.0%) in 2023 compared to adults in the highest income bracket, likely driven by the higher rates of nutrition and food insecurity among adults in poverty.

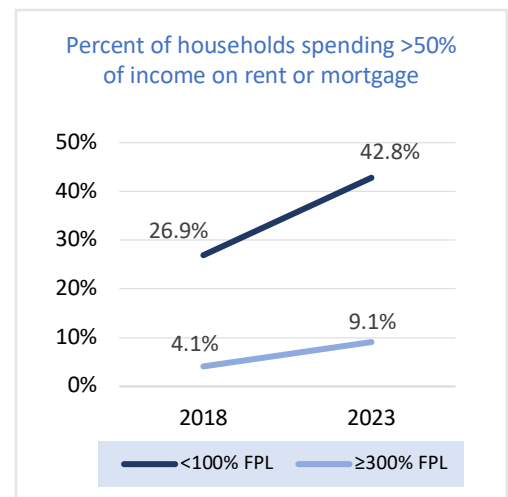


These disparities in health outcomes, healthcare access, and health behaviors are largely due to underlying economic and social factors:

About 1 in 2 adults in poverty live in food insecure households

- **Nutrition and food insecurity and safety:** In 2023, adults living in poverty reported higher rates of nutrition insecurity (47.7% vs 25.8%) and food insecurity (51.3% vs 11.0%), feeling that their neighborhoods were not safe from crime (38.7% vs 19.0%), and housing burden (70.9% vs 38.9%) compared to adults in the highest income bracket.

- **Housing:** Almost a third (32.8%) of households living below 100% FPL reported that they delayed or were unable to pay mortgage or rent in the past 2 years, a significant increase from 17.9% in 2018. In addition, the percentage of households in poverty who reported that they were severely housing burdened (spending more than 50% of income on rent or mortgage) also significantly increased between 2018 and 2023, from 26.9% to 42.8%.



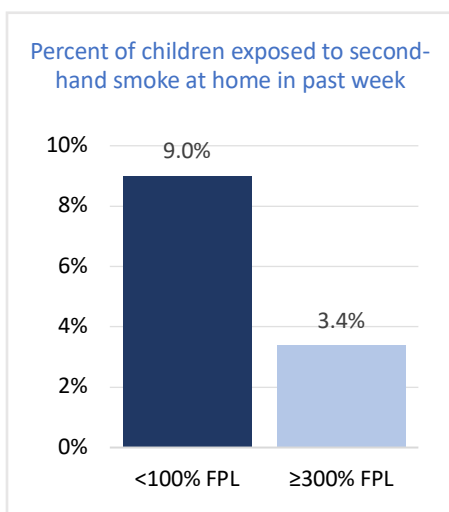
## Children Living Below 100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

Similar to adults living in poverty, children living in poverty were also at disproportionately higher risk for adverse health outcomes, challenges with healthcare access, and unhealthy behaviors:

- **Asthma:** Children living below 100% FPL were found to have higher rates of ever being diagnosed with asthma compared to children living at or above 300% FPL (12.6% vs 10.3%).
- **Healthcare access:** In 2023, significantly fewer children in poverty were reported to have a regular source of medical care compared to children in the highest income group (85.3% vs 96.8%). In addition, nearly 1 in 5 children in poverty (19.6%) reported difficulty accessing needed medical care, compared to 7.9% of children from the highest income group.
- **Soda or sugar-sweetened beverages:** Children in poverty were significantly more likely to have reported daily consumption of soda or sugar-sweetened beverages compared to children in the highest income bracket (46.0% vs 21.4%).

As is the case for adults in poverty, these observed outcomes among children in poverty are largely driven by underlying social, economic, and environmental factors:

- **Food insecurity:** Almost half (49.5%) of children in poverty were found to live in food insecure households in 2023, and almost a third (30.8%) were reported to live in communities that were rated as having fair or poor access to fresh fruits and vegetables.



- **Neighborhood safety:** Almost a third (29.4%) of children in poverty were reported to live in neighborhoods that were rated as somewhat or very unsafe, and over a quarter (25.4%) were reported to not have easy access to a park, playground, or other place that is safe from crime to play.
- **Second-hand smoke:** In 2023, almost 1 in 10 children in poverty (9.0%) were reported to have been exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke in their primary residence (including from a neighboring residence) in the past 7 days, compared to 3.4% of children in the highest income bracket. Second-hand smoke may increase risk of asthma and can trigger asthma exacerbations.



## CONCLUSION

The 2023 LACHS reveals substantial variation in health outcomes and health behaviors among Black adults, Latinx adults, Asian adults, adults living below 100% FPL, and children living below 100% FPL in Los Angeles County. Addressing the social and structural inequities in the underlying economic, social, and environmental conditions that lead to this disproportionality in health outcomes and bolstering existing community assets are critical for improving health and reducing inequities.

To learn more, please visit the [Los Angeles County Health Survey website](#).