# Center for Family and Demographic Research

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF YOUNG ADULTS

This brief provides a demographic description of the health and well-being of young adults, aged 18-29, in Ohio. There are about 1.8 million young adults in Ohio making up about 16 % of the state population. The majority, 82%, of young adults in Ohio are White, followed by 13% Black, and 3% claim Hispanic ethnicity. Seventy-four percent of Ohioans aged 18-29 have never been married, 22% are currently married, and 4% are divorced. Not surprisingly, marital status varies by age. Ninety percent of 18-24-year-olds area not married, but only 52% of 25-29-year-olds have never been married. This age group has a higher rate of residential mobility than any other age group. Thirty-four percent of young adults from Ohio moved within the last year compared to only 10% of individuals over the age of 29.[1]

Education and Employment Status - The minority (37%) of Ohioans aged 18-29 are currently enrolled in some form of education. Of those currently enrolled, 23% are in private institutions, and 77% are in public institutions. Not surprisingly, people aged 18-24 (52%) are significantly more likely to be in school compared to 25-29-year-olds (15%). Young adult women (39%) are more likely to be enrolled in school contrasted to males (35%). The gender difference remains for both younger and older young adults. Sixty-eight percent of young adults that reside in Ohio are currently employed, 9% are unemployed, and 23% are not in the labor force. This is similar to the national estimate of 67% of young adults are employed. Females (25%) in Ohio are more likely to not be in the labor force compared to males (21%). Males are more likely to be employed (69%) and unemployed (10%) in contrast with females (66% and 8% respectively).[2]
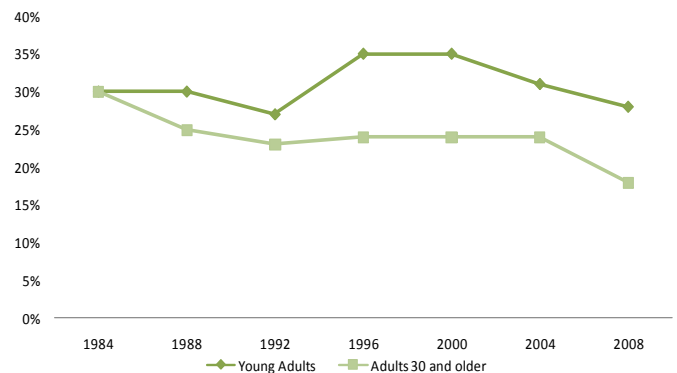
Health Behaviors - Young adults are significantly more likely to be a smoker than older adults. Figure 2 illustrates that there has been a decline in smoking for older adults during the past 24 years (1984:30% vs. 2008:19%). However, for young adults in Ohio, smoking has remained relatively high (1984:30% vs. 2008:28%) and even increased during the late 90's. Young adults fare worse in terms of smoking, binge drinking, always wearing their seatbelt, and getting enough sleep compared to Ohioans aged 30 and above.[3] Significantly more young adults have exercised in the past 30 days compared to older adults. Table 1 shows differences in health behaviors between young adult males and females. Young adult males (36%) are more likely to binge drink compared to their female counterparts (22%). Females are significantly more likely to practice the healthy behaviors of always wearing a seatbelt (77% vs. 67%) and having been tested for HIV (39% vs. 29%).[4]

Figure 1. Percent of Young Adults Uninsured by State
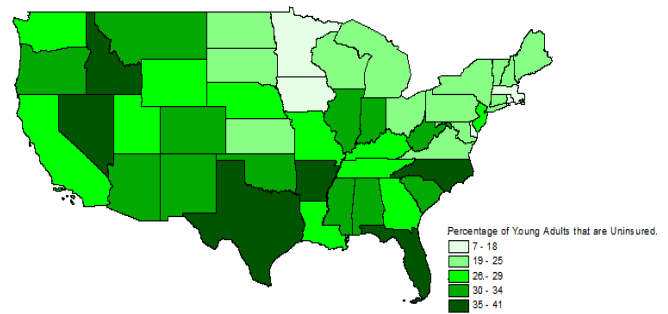
Health Insurance - Among Ohio adults, individuals aged 18-29 have the highest rates of being uninsured in the state. About 25% of Ohio young adults are uninsured compared to 12% of 30 to 49-year-olds, 11% of 50 to 64-year-olds, and only 1% of individuals aged 65 and older. This is just slightly better than the national average; 28% of American young adults are uninsured. Ohio ranks 20th best in the nation for the percentage of young adults not insured. The three states with the lowest levels of uninsured young adults are Massachusetts, Delaware, and Hawaii (see Figure1). The three states with the highest rates of uninsured young adults are Texas, Nevada, and Idaho.[3] Significantly more young adults in Ohio (25%) avoided medical treatment in the past year because of cost or they did not have medical insurance compared to older adults (19%). Young adults (64%) are more likely to claim that their health is either excellent or good compared to other adults (50%) in Ohio.[4]

Figure 2: Percent of Adults that Smoke in Ohio
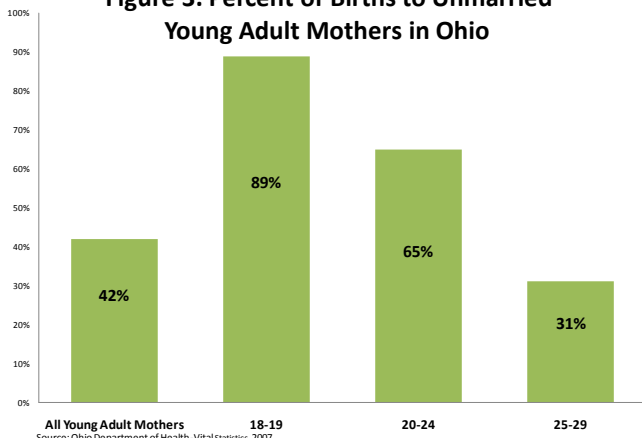

Source: CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

Table 1. Health Behaviors for Male and Female Young Adults in Ohio

	Males	SE	Females	SE	Statistically Significant Gender Difference
Currently a Smoker	30%	+/-3%	26%	+/-3%	No
Binge Drank During the Past 30 days (Binge drinking=5 or more drinks in a sitting for males and 4 or more for females)	36%	+/-3%	22%	+/-2%	Yes
Exercised in the past 30 days	80%	+/-3%	81%	+/-2%	No
Has Been Tested for HIV	29%	+/-3%	39%	+/-3%	Yes
Always Wears a Seatbelt When Riding in a Car	67%	+/-3%	77%	+/-3%	Yes
In the past 30 days, Respondent Has Had Enough Sleep	19%	+/-3%	17%	+/-3%	No

Source: 2008 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System CDC

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Figure 3. Percent of Births to Unmarried Young Adult Mothers in Ohio

Source: Ohio Department of Health-Vital Statistics 2007

What is BMI? - Body Mass Index is calculated using a person's height and weight. Normal weight is classified as an under 25. Overweight is between 25-29 and the obese range is 30+. To find out your BMI go to http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult_bmi/index.html

Figure 4. Overweight and Obese Young Adults in Ohio by Poverty Status

Legend: Normal or Underweight, Overweight, Obese

Sources:
1. US Census Bureau: American Community Survey 2007
2. 2005-2007 American Community Survey
3. 2008 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System CDC
4. 2008 Ohio Family and Health Survey
5. 2007 Ohio Department of Health-Vital Statistics
6. 2009 US Census Bureau
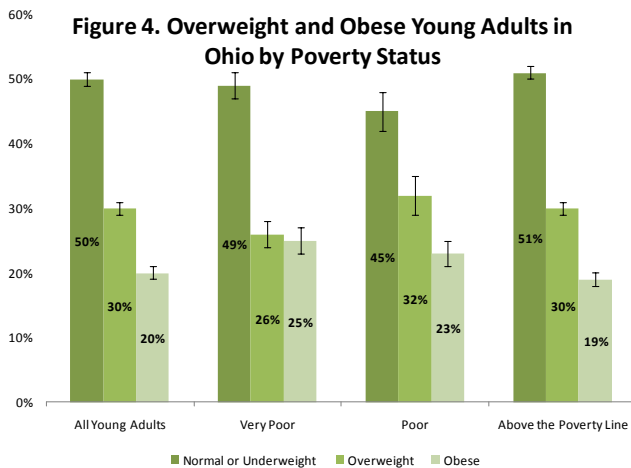7. U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division

Young Adult Fertility- Among young adult females, the fertility rate is 75.7 for 18-19-year-olds, 106 for 20-24-year-olds, and 114 for 25-29-year-olds. Fertility rates are per 1,000 women in the age group. Even though younger young adults have lower fertility rates when they do have children, they are less likely to be married (Figure 3). Forty-two percent of all young adult mothers have a birth outside of marriage. However, this percent is as high as 89% for women aged 18-19 and as low as 31% for women aged 25-29.[5]

Overweight and Obesity - Of all young adult Ohioans, 20% are obese, and 30% are overweight. This varies by race and gender. Black females are significantly more likely to be obese (30%) compared to White males (20%), White females (21%), or Black males (18%). Obesity does vary by poverty status (Figure 4). Individuals who are classified as poor are significantly less likely to be of normal weight compared to individuals above the poverty line (45% vs. 51%). Further, the very poor are significantly more likely to be obese (25%) compared to individuals that are not poor (19%). The remaining differences across poverty lines are not statistically significant. Young adults that are obese can have the onset of early heath problems. Ten percent of all young adults in Ohio have high blood pressure; however, 21 % of obese young adults have high blood pressure compared to 8% of individuals that are not obese. This is a statistically significant difference. Further, obese young adults are significantly more likely to have diabetes (5% vs. 2%).[4]

What do the lines at the top of the bar chart mean? These lines at the top of the bar chart represent the standard error. The US Census Bureau explains that the standard error represents variability of an estimate because of sampling. We can be 95% sure that the true population estimate falls within the range of the standard error. Also, we need the standard error to establish statistical difference between groups.[6]

How is Poverty Measured? The poverty measure in the US is the predetermined minimum income thresholds needed to support the number of individuals in a family.[7] For an individual, the poverty level is $14,840 per year. In Figure 3, the poor are classified as 65-100% of poverty or earns $9,646 per year. Individuals earning less are classified as very poor.