Perception, management of stress among region’s adults

Stress is a normal part of life. It may be short-term (acute), caused by situations such as a presentation or a big test. Stress may also be long-term (chronic), caused by situations such as extended unemployment or a long illness. Stress is the way the body reacts to these stimuli by releasing hormones, increasing heart rate and tensing muscles.¹

High levels of stress over time can cause negative health outcomes.²

The 2017 Community Health Status Survey (CHSS) asked adults in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky about their experience with stress.

2 IN 10 ADULTS REPORT HIGH LEVELS OF STRESS; NEARLY ALL THINK THIS LEVEL IS UNHEALTHY

CHSS asked, “On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means you have ‘little or no stress’ and 10 means you have ‘a great deal of stress’ how would you rate your average level of stress during the past month?”

In our region, 2 in 10 adults (20%) reported a high level of stress (rating of 8, 9 or 10). This is the same as the national results found by the American Psychological Association in 2016 (20%).³ In our region, 5 in 10 adults (50%) reported a moderate level of stress (rating of 4, 5, 6 or 7), and 3 in 10 (29%) reported a low level of stress (rating of 1, 2 or 3).

CHSS also asked, “On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means you have ‘little or no stress’ and 10 means you have ‘a great deal of stress’ what would you consider a healthy level of stress?”

In our region, of adults (42%) said a moderate level of 4 to 7 was healthy. Only 2% of adults said a high level of 8 to 10 was healthy.

HIGHER STRESS REPORTED BY WOMEN, ADULTS WITH LOWER INCOME OR FAIR OR POOR HEALTH

Some groups in the region were more likely to report high stress levels.

On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means you have ‘little or no stress’ and 10 means you have ‘a great deal of stress,’ ...

... how would you rate your average level of stress during the past month?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Stress</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low stress, level 1-3</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate stress, level 4-7</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High stress, level 8-10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

... what would you consider a healthy level of stress?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Stress</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low stress, level 1-3</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate stress, level 4-7</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High stress, level 8-10</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals do not add to 100 percent because the response “don’t know” in not included and because of rounding.

More than 2 in 10 women (24%) reported high levels of stress compared with fewer than 2 in 10 men (17%).

Nearly 4 in 10 adults earning 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) or less reported high stress levels (38%). This compares with more than 2 in 10 adults earning between 100% and 200% FPG (24%) and fewer than 2 in 10 adults earning more than 200% FPG (16%).

Stress levels also varied by self-reported health status. Among adults reporting fair or poor health, nearly 4 in 10 reported high levels of stress (39%). This compares with 2 in 10 adults who reported good health (21%) and about 1 in 10 adults who reported excellent or very good health (14%).

**MOST DO GOOD JOB MANAGING STRESS; VARIES BY INCOME, HEALTH STATUS**

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, “Taking practical steps to manage your stress can reduce or prevent” the negative health impacts of stress. These steps can include exercise, social connection, mindfulness, relaxation, or help from a health care provider. (For more information, see www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.)

CHSS asked, “How good a job do you think you do managing your stress?” Nearly 8 in 10 adults (78%) said they did an excellent, very good or good job managing stress. About 2 in 10 adults (22%) said they did a fair or poor job managing stress.

Adults with lower income were less likely to report managing stress well. Fewer than 7 in 10 adults earning 100% FPG or less (68%) said they did an excellent, very good or good job managing their stress. This compares with nearly 8 in 10 adults earning between 100% and 200% FPG (77%), and more than 8 in 10 adults earning more than 200% FPG (82%).

Adults in fair or poor health were also less likely to report managing stress well. About 6 in 10 adults (62%) in fair or poor health said they did an excellent, very good or good job managing stress. This compares with nearly 8 in 10 adults (77%) in good health, and more than 8 in 10 adults in excellent or very good health (85%).