

# Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Among American Indian and Alaska Natives in California



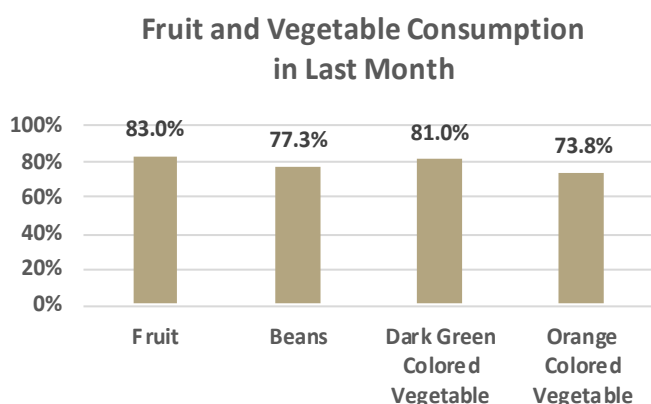
A fact sheet by the CRIHB Research and Public Health Department

September 2016



Cancer is the leading cause of death among American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN) in California.<sup>1</sup> There are several ways to reduce the risk of getting cancer. The most accepted way to reduce the risk of developing cancer is to engage in a healthy lifestyle. Besides not using commercial tobacco and reducing alcohol consumption, other parts of a healthy lifestyle include eating healthy and being physically active.<sup>2</sup> Eating healthy includes regular consumption of fruits and vegetables. Between 2012 and 2013, the California Tribal Epidemiology Center (CTEC) conducted the California Tribal Behavioral Risk Factor Community Survey (CTBRFCS) throughout the AIAN community in California. The survey looked at several behaviors that impact health. The survey included questions on fruit and vegetable consumption as well as physical activity.

## Fruit and Vegetable Consumption



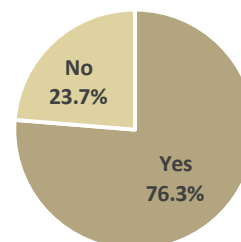
Fruits and vegetables are low in calories and are filled with vitamins and minerals and fiber.<sup>3</sup> The USDA recommends eating 2-4 servings of fruit per day and 3-5 servings of vegetables per day.<sup>4</sup> For respondents, 83.0% had at least one serving of fruit in the last month, while 77.3% had a serving of beans, 81.0% had a dark green colored vegetable, and 73.8% had an orange colored vegetable. Further analysis showed there were some differences in consumption based on age, gender, income, and education level. Older respondents were more likely to have eaten an orange vegetable compared to younger respondents. Men reported eating fruits, dark green

vegetables and other vegetables more than women. Middle income residents were more likely to report eating beans compared to low or high income respondents. There was a higher respondent level to eating dark green vegetables among those at the highest education level compared to the lower education levels.

## Physical Activity

Being physically active reduces the risk of developing colon and breast cancer.<sup>5</sup> The United States Surgeon General recommends that people do at least 30 minutes of physical activity for 5 days a week.<sup>6</sup> According to the CTBRFCS, 76.3% of respondents participated in some form of physical activity such as walking, gardening, running, calisthenics, or playing golf for exercise in the last month. There were no differences in response by age, gender, income, educational level, or body mass index (BMI) Category.

## Physical Activity in Last Month



# Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Among American Indian and Alaska Natives in California



A fact sheet by the CRIHB Research and Public Health Department

September 2016



## Notes

The CTBRFCS was conducted by CTEC from 2012-2013 throughout California. It is a Tribally adapted version of the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System. Respondents were over the age of 18 and a total of 973 self-reported AIAN completed the survey. It is one of the largest samples of AIAN in California. The Summary Report of the CTBRFCS can be found at: <https://crihb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/CTBRFCSSummaryReport.pdf>.

Data for this fact sheet came through a CTEC Technical Assistance Request to analyze the CTBRFCS data of vegetable and fruit consumption, as well as physical activity, by the variables of gender, age, income, education level, BMI category, and transportation. The data was analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

## References

1. Cancer Mortality Data Trends for 2000-2010: Race/Ethnicity Group Differences. California Department of Public Health Web site. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohir/Pages/Cancer2010Race.aspx>. Accessed March 16, 2016.
2. Cancer prevention: 7 tips to reduce your risk. Mayo Clinic Web site. <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/cancer-prevention/art-20044816>. Accessed March 16, 2016.
3. Top 10 Reasons to Eat MORE Fruits & Vegetables. Fruits & Veggies More Matters Web site. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/top-10-reasons-to-eat-more-fruits-and-vegetables>. Accessed June 24, 2016.
4. Guthrie J. Understanding Fruit and Vegetable Choices—Research Briefs. United States Department of Agriculture Web site. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aib-agricultural-information-bulletin/aib792.aspx>. Published November 2004. Updated June 3, 2013. Accessed June 24, 2016.
5. Physical Activity and Health. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site. <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/>. Updated June 4, 2015. Accessed June 27, 2016.
6. Active Living. Surgeon General of the United States Web site. <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/priorities/prevention/strategy/active-living.html>. Accessed June 27, 2016.