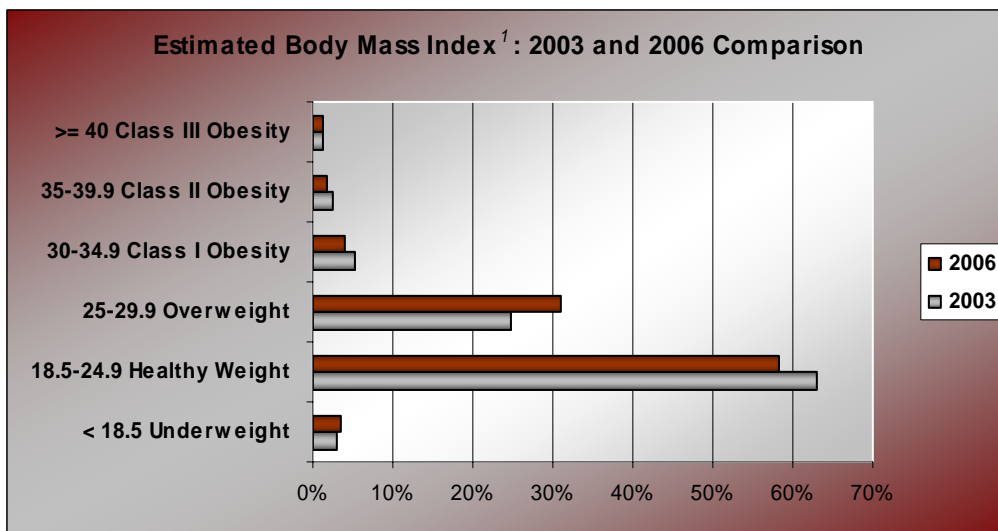


# Weight, Nutrition, and Exercise

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

## *National College Health Assessment*

Initiated in 1998, the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) is a national research survey organized by the American College Health Association (ACHA) to assist college health educators, counselors, and administrators, as well as health service providers, in collecting data about their students' habits, behaviors, and perceptions on the most prevalent health topics. The Ohio State University participated in the survey in Spring 2003 and Spring 2006.



*The above chart compares students' Body Mass Index in 2003 and 2006. Body Mass Index (BMI), developed by ACHA, incorporates reported height and weight to form a general indicator of physical health. Though not reaching statistical significance, data indicate that while less students are obese in 2006 than in 2003, more students are overweight and less students are within the healthy weight range than in 2003.*

## Student Affairs Assessment Report

January 2007

This newsletter highlights findings pertaining to body weight, nutrition, and physical exercise from the 2006 Ohio State distribution of the National College Health Assessment (NCHA). Results were compared with national data as well as findings from the 2003 OSU survey. Information provided in this newsletter may help identify and prioritize health initiatives to promote student physical health and reduce chronic disease associated with diet and weight.

# Findings

## General Findings and Comparison with National Data \*

### Weight

#### Weight perception

- Students' actual weight may differ from their perceptions of their weight. For example, when asked to describe their body weight, 40.5% of students perceived themselves as overweight or slightly overweight. The BMI information obtained through the survey, however, suggests that 38.2% weighed beyond the healthy weight range.

#### Weight management

- Among students whose weight is within the BMI desired weight range, 40.5% said they were trying to lose weight.

#### Strategies to lose weight

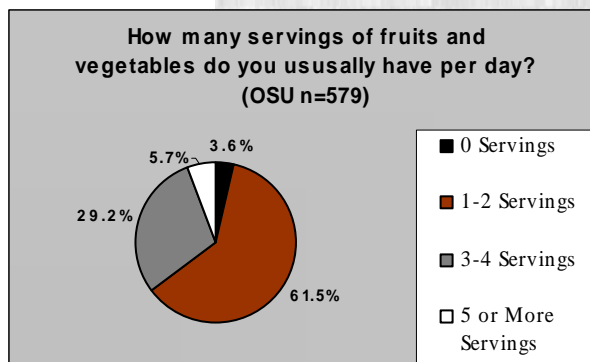
- Within the last 30 days, 58.3% of the survey respondents exercised to lose weight. 39.1% dieted to lose weight. Comparison with the NCHA national data reveals that the proportion of OSU students who dieted to lose weight is significantly larger than that of the national sample (33.9%).

#### Gender differences

- Comparisons based on demographic information suggest that most significant differences are based on gender. For example, among female students who have the desired weight according to BMI, 19.6% perceived themselves as slightly overweight or very overweight. This percentage for similar male students is only 6.4%. In addition, 57.4% of the female students with desired BMI weight are trying to lose weight, whereas only 12.0% of similar male students indicated so.

### Nutrition

- Servings of fruits and vegetables** The following question on the survey pertains to nutrition: *How many servings of fruits and vegetables do you usually have per day (1 serving = 1 medium piece of fruit, 1/2 chopped, cooked or canned fruits/vegetables, 3/4 cup fruit/vegetable juice, small bowl of salad greens, or 1/2 cup dried fruit)?*
- Statistical tests suggest that **compared with national data**, significantly lower proportions of Ohio State students reported having 3 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day while a significantly higher proportion of OSU students responded that they don't eat fruits and vegetables.
- Significant differences regarding nutrition were found based on **academic level**. A significantly larger proportion of graduate students (38.1%) and professional students (38.9%) have 3-4 servings of fruits and vegetables than undergraduate students (25.1%). The same pattern was revealed for students having 5 or more servings (7.1% of graduate students and 9.5% professional students, as compared to 4.3% undergraduate students).
- Differences were also suggested based on **gender**: Significantly more female students (34.8%) usually have 3-4 servings of fruits and vegetables than male students (21.9%). The proportions for having 5 or more servings are similar for female (6.0%) and male (5.5%).



	% Weighted OSU Sample	% NCHA National Sample
0 Servings	4.0%	3.7%
3-4 Servings	26.6%	30.1%
5 or More	4.9%	7.0%

## General Findings and Comparison with National Data, Continued

### Exercise

<b>0 Days</b>	<b>22.3%</b>
<b>1 Day</b>	<b>16.8%</b>
<b>2 Days</b>	<b>16.8%</b>
<b>3 Days</b>	<b>17.2%</b>
<b>4 Days</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
<b>5 Days</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
<b>6 Days</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
<b>7 Days</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

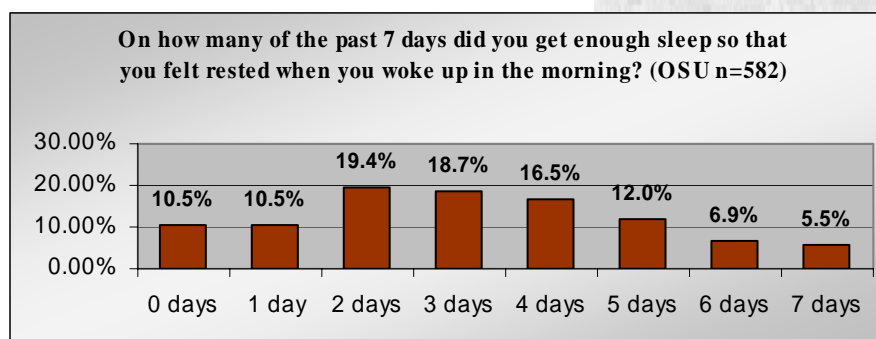
- On the survey, one item regarding physical exercise asks: *On how many of the past 7 days did you participate in vigorous exercise for at least 20 minutes or moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes?* (See the chart on the left for percentage distribution of the answers to this question).
- Data of the OSU 2006 sample indicate that the majority of students (about 77.7%) responded that they engaged in vigorous or moderate exercise on at least one of the past 7 days while 22.3% of the students didn't participate in physical exercise during the past 7 days. This is consistent with the patterns revealed by

the NCHA national data.

- No significant differences* were found regarding student participation in physical exercise based on gender, ethnicity, or academic level.

### Sleep

- About 24.4% OSU students reported having enough sleep on 5 or more days of the past 7 days.
- There is no statistical difference regarding sleep patterns between the OSU and NCHA national samples.



- Comparisons based on demographics indicated that the only significant difference is based on **academic level**: Significantly more graduate students (41.7%) get enough sleep on 5 or more days during the past 7 days than do undergraduate students (21.4%) and professional students (21.6%).

## Comparing OSU 2006 Data with OSU 2003 Data

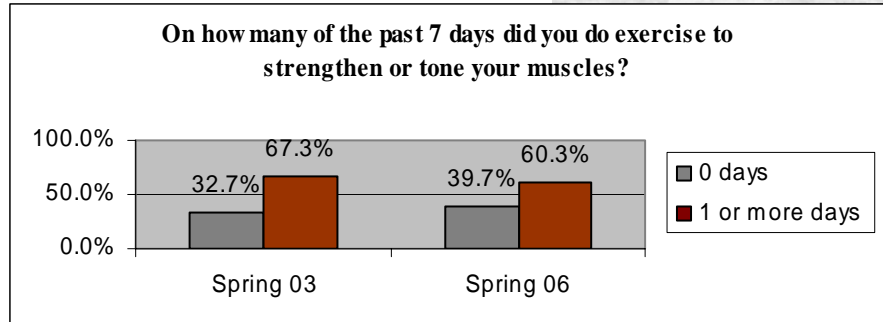
Comparisons were made between data from 2006 and 2003 to detect any significant changes in patterns of student behaviors regarding body weight, nutrition, and exercise. Due to sampling limitations, this comparison only applies to the undergraduate student population.

- No significant differences* were found in terms of student **BMI, perceptions of weight, weight management, and strategies to lose weight**.
- No significant differences* were found regarding the number of **servings of fruits and vegetables** students usually have per day.

## Comparing OSU 2006 Data with OSU 2003 Data, Continued

### Exercise

- Data from 2006 indicate that compared with 2003, significantly less students reported doing exercise to strengthen or tone muscles on 1 or more days during the past 7 days. (See adjacent chart ).
- No significant differences were found between the two years in terms of student participation in vigorous exercise for at least 20 minutes or moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes



### Sleep

- In comparison with the results of 2003, significantly less students in 2006 (21.7% as compared to 30.0% in 2003) reported getting enough sleep on 5 or more days during the past 7 days.

\* Comparisons of OSU data with national data were made after weighting the 2006 OSU sample to match the NCHA sample of spring 2003. Statistical differences are tested using Chi-Square tests at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  unless otherwise noted. The source of national data is available through American College Health Association. American College Health Association - National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA) Web Summary. Updated April 2006. Available at [http://www.acha.org/projects\\_programs/ncha\\_sampledata.cfm](http://www.acha.org/projects_programs/ncha_sampledata.cfm). 2006.

**This newsletter contains only a sample of information. Contact the Office of Student Affairs Assessment for customized analysis to address specific policy issues.**

[http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/sa\\_assessment.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/sa_assessment.asp)

The Office of  
Student Affairs Assessment  
The Ohio State University  
01B Raney Commons  
47 Curl Drive  
Columbus, OH 43210-1111  
(614) 247-6220