

TO: The American Heart Association
FROM: Hart Research Associates
DATE: August 28, 2018
RE: Findings from a Survey in Select Los Angeles ZIP Codes on Health and Wellness

From May 29 to June 10, 2018, Hart Research Associates conducted a survey among residents in five East Los Angeles ZIP Codes¹ on behalf of the American Heart Association. A total of 400 adult residents were interviewed by telephone. The survey's sample is geographically and demographically representative of the area's adult population.

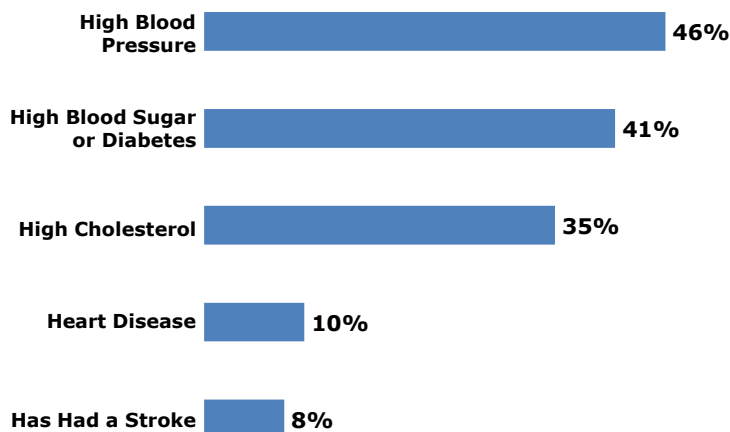
The survey finds that a majority of residents in these ZIP Codes assess their local community health as fair or poor, and a large number have serious chronic health problems. And importantly, the survey uncovers that residents have significant difficulty with access to healthy foods. This memorandum outlines the survey's key findings.

General Assessment of Health

When asked to rate the general health of people in their local community, East LA residents are not optimistic—only 9% say their community's health is excellent or good, 34% say it is good, and half (51%) say it is fair (37%) or poor (14%).

The poor outlook toward community health is consistent with the fact that large numbers of East LA residents report that they and/or someone else in their household suffers from at least one serious chronic health condition:

Percent that Applies to Them or Someone Else in Their Household



¹ 90022, 90023, 90031, 90032, 90033

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In addition to noteworthy numbers of East LA residents reporting that they or someone in their household has a chronic health problem, many express concern about these health problems existing in their community more broadly—with problems related to diet topping the list. Sixty-four percent (64%) of East LA residents say that high blood sugar and diabetes is a major problem in their community, 62% say that obesity and weight control is a major problem, and 62% say that having an unhealthy diet or poor eating habits is a major problem. And the outlook is even more unsettling when looking at residents of different incomes—with the exception of unhealthy diet, concerns about health problems are notably higher among lower-income residents.

Percent Saying Each is a Major Problem in Their Local Community				
	All	Income under \$30K	Income \$30K-\$50K	Income \$50k+
	%	%	%	%
High blood sugar and diabetes	64	74	65	60
Obesity and weight control	62	72	61	61
Having an unhealthy diet or poor eating habits	62	66	60	68
High levels of cholesterol	56	70	52	45
Drug use	54	65	57	48
High blood pressure and hypertension	54	65	51	45
Lack of physical activity and exercise	53	60	59	49
Violence	40	47	46	34

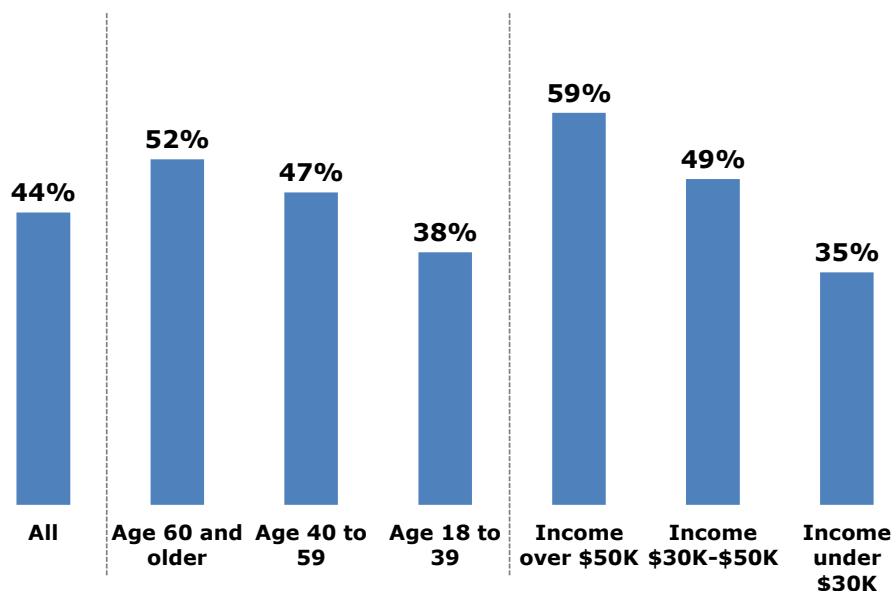
Access to Healthy Foods

Given that more than half of East LA residents cite problems related to diet as major problems in their community, it is important to understand how they view their personal diets and access to healthy foods. In fact, only 43% of East LA residents say their family's diet is healthy (with only 16% saying very healthy). By comparison, half (49%) say their family's diet is a mix between healthy and unhealthy, and 7% say their family's diet is unhealthy. Again, income is an important factor for assessment of family diet—only 38% of residents who have incomes less than \$30K say their family's diet is healthy, compared with 42% of residents who have incomes between \$30K and \$50K and 48% of residents who have incomes exceeding \$50K.

Generally speaking, East LA residents report difficulty in getting healthy foods—just 44% say it is very easy to get healthy foods, and 55% report some difficulty in getting healthy foods, which includes 31% who say somewhat easy, 17% who say somewhat hard, and 7% who say very hard.

There are large discrepancies in the perceived ease of obtaining healthy foods by age and income—younger and lower-income residents express far less ease in accessing healthy foods than their older and higher-income neighbors.

Percent that Say Very Easy to Get Healthy Foods



Access to healthy foods has a significant effect on other major health factors. Residents who report having difficulty getting healthy food are also more likely to report having a pessimistic attitude toward overall community health, report that specific health problems in their community are major problems, and deal with chronic health problems in their household.

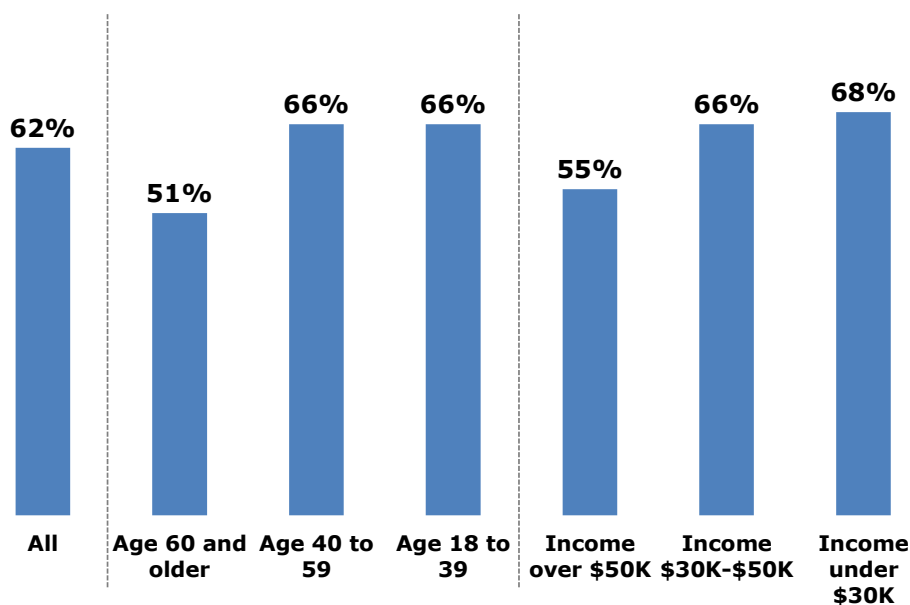
Percent Reporting Each Health Metric

	<u>All %</u>	<u>Getting healthy foods is very easy %</u>	<u>Getting healthy foods is somewhat easy %</u>	<u>Getting healthy foods is hard %</u>
Local community health is fair/poor	51	38	62	61
High blood sugar/diabetes is a major problem in their community	64	60	60	82
Obesity/weight control is a major problem in their community	62	58	63	68
Someone in their household has high blood pressure	46	43	46	53
Someone in their household has high blood sugar or diabetes	41	34	42	52

Grocery store access is not the problem stopping East LA residents from getting healthy foods: 97% shop at a grocery store at least sometimes, with 87% saying they do so often. However, grocery stores are not the sole source of food for East LA residents—nearly two-thirds (64%) say they get food at fast food or takeout restaurants at least sometimes and half (53%) say they get food at a corner store, bodega, or convenience store at least sometimes. But for the 24% of East LA residents who say healthy foods are hard to obtain, fast food and takeout is a more frequent source of food: nearly three-quarters (72%) say they get food in this way at least sometimes.

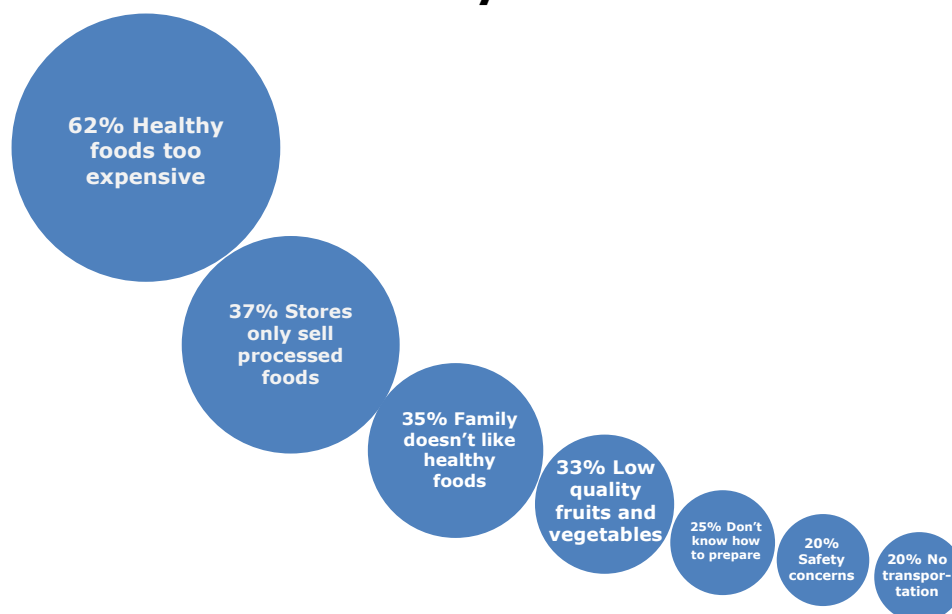
The most significant barrier East LA residents have in accessing healthy food is cost: 62% say that the cost of healthy food is a problem, including 31% saying it is a big problem. Among East LA residents who say it is hard access to healthy food, the proportion citing cost as a problem grows to 86%. Similarly, younger residents struggle more with the cost of healthy foods than older residents, and lower-income residents struggle more than higher-income residents.

Percent that Say Healthy Foods Being Too Expensive is a Big/Somewhat of a Problem



While the cost of healthy food is the most pervasive problem for East LA residents, it is not the only one. Large numbers of residents also cite stores only selling processed foods, their family preferences, quality of available produce, family preferences, or not knowing how to prepare healthy foods as problems as well.

Big/Somewhat of a Problem for Getting Healthy Foods



While East LA residents report many obstacles to healthy eating, they also embrace a number of solutions to increase it. Large majorities predict that members of their community would have a great deal or fair amount of interest in four possible solutions.

Percent Who Say Community Would Be Interested in Each Healthy Food Solution

	<u>Total Interest</u> %
Helping people with low incomes pay for fruits and vegetables and healthy food options	72
More education programs in schools to teach children how to have a healthy diet and lifestyle	70
More affordable healthy food options, including grocery stores and local markets that sell fruits and vegetables	69
Classes that teach people how to eat healthier and prepare healthy foods	56

For those residents who say that getting healthy foods is hard, the most appealing solutions are monetary based—66% have a *great deal* of interest in helping people with low incomes pay for fruits and vegetables and healthy food options (compared with 56% of residents who say getting healthy foods is very easy) and 61% have a great deal of interest in having more affordable healthy food options, including grocery stores and local markets that sell fruits and vegetables (compared with 52% of residents who say getting healthy foods is very easy).

Social Determinates of Health

When asked about aspects of their community that need improvement, East LA residents rate the availability of affordable housing (82% needs a lot or fair amount of improvement), availability of good paying jobs (79% needs a lot or fair amount of improvement), and the cleanliness of the air and water (77% needs a lot or fair amount of improvement) highest. With the exception of the availability of public transportation, people who see unhealthy diet as a major problem in their community assess each area tested as needing a lot of improvement at higher rates than those who say unhealthy diet and lack of exercise as less of a problem.

Percent Who Say Each Needs A LOT of Improvement

	<u>All</u> %	<u>Unhealthy Diet Major Problem</u> %	<u>Unhealthy diet minor problem</u> %	<u>Unhealthy diet not a problem</u> %
The availability of affordable housing	67	78	56	44
The availability of good-paying jobs	59	69	49	35
The cleanliness of the air and water	56	65	43	43
The quality of public schools	51	56	40	47
The safety of the community	42	50	29	30
The quality and availability of child care	38	43	30	31
The quality and availability of parks and other recreation spaces	37	46	20	29
The availability of public transportation	26	27	21	28

But residents see potential in the future—75% say that it is very important for residents of their local community to work together to take steps to make improvements to their community. This belief exists across all groups of the community, but is especially strong among those who say it is hard to get healthy foods (83% very important), those who say the cost of healthy foods is a big problem (85% very important), and those who say unhealthy diet is a major problem in their community (78%).