



STRESS BY CITY CHICAGO

Stress in Chicago



Year after year, people living in Chicago* report stress at levels that are similar to the national average. But according to the most recent *Stress in America*™ survey, the average stress level in Chicago is at its lowest point since 2008, even though it still exceeds the level that Chicagoans define as healthy stress. While money, work and the economy are the most commonly reported sources of stress in Chicago, the percentage of Chicagoans reporting stress about job stability is at its highest point in several years. And though people living in Chicago seem to recognize the impact of lifestyle on a person's health, they are less likely than Americans overall to say that stress has a strong impact on their health.

STRESS LEVELS DROPPED IN CHICAGO, MOVING CLOSER TO WHAT RESIDENTS BELIEVE IS HEALTHY.



4.7



IS THE **average stress level** REPORTED BY ADULTS IN CHICAGO IN 2012

Perceptions of Stress and Its Sources

Chicagoans report a slightly lower average stress level than Americans overall, and fewer residents report extreme stress.

Chicagoans report an average stress level of 4.7 on a 10-point scale, where 1 is "little or no stress" and 10 is "a great deal of stress." Comparatively, Chicagoans consider 3.7 to be a healthy level of stress.

The average stress level in Chicago this year declined notably from the city's average stress level of 5.6 in 2011 and is slightly lower than the national average of 4.9.

Similar percentages of Chicagoans report experiencing extreme stress (an 8, 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale) as adults overall (19 percent vs. 20 percent). However, the percentage of Chicago residents experiencing extreme stress is down from 24 percent a year ago.

At the same time, however, slightly more Chicagoans this year say their stress has increased over the past year (40 percent vs. 36 percent).

The most common sources of stress for Chicagoans are the same as adults overall, but slightly more Chicagoans report that money, work and the economy are stressors (money: 75 percent vs. 69 percent; work: 68 percent vs. 65 percent; economy: 66 percent vs. 61 percent).

Significantly more Chicagoans than Americans overall report relationships (64 percent vs. 56 percent) and job stability (57 percent vs. 49 percent) as sources of stress. The percentage of Chicagoans who cite job stability as a source of stress is at its highest point in recent years (55 percent in 2011 and 2010, 52 percent in 2009 and 42 percent in 2008).

* This report focuses only on the views of residents within the Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area (2008 n=231; 2009 n=208; 2010 n=208; 2011 n=276; 2012 n=209) and the general population (2008 n=1791; 2009 n=1568; 2010 n=1134; 2011 n=1226; 2012 n=2020).

For the full methodology, visit stressinamerica.org.



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Managing Stress

Chicagoans are more likely this year to say they are doing a good job of managing stress. But when it comes to seeking the help of psychologists, Chicagoans are less likely than adults nationwide to think that psychologists can be helpful with stress management and making lifestyle or behavior changes.

Sixty-five percent of Chicagoans say they are doing enough to manage stress, a dramatic increase from 49 percent in 2011.

Fifty-four percent of Chicago residents report having tried to reduce their stress over the past five years. Of those, 36 percent have succeeded in reducing stress; 47 percent are still trying.

Chicagoans report exercising or walking (54 percent), listening to music (54 percent) and reading (44 percent) as their most common stress management techniques.

Chicagoans are less likely than adults nationwide to think that psychologists can help with lifestyle or behavior changes (33 percent vs. 42 percent). Similarly, fewer Chicagoans than Americans overall say that they have been referred to a mental health provider (8 percent vs. 12 percent).

Stress and Well-Being

People living in Chicago are just as likely to believe they are in excellent or very good health as adults nationwide, which is an improvement since 2009. More also appear to place importance on various aspects of well-being than in previous years.

Forty percent of both Chicagoans and Americans overall rate their health as excellent or very good. For Chicagoans, this represents a slight increase from 34 percent in 2011.

Chicagoans are more likely than Americans overall to say that eating healthy is very or extremely important (67 percent vs. 60 percent) — a dramatic increase from 51 percent in 2011 and 2010.

65%

OF Chicagoans SAY THEY ARE DOING ENOUGH TO MANAGE STRESS





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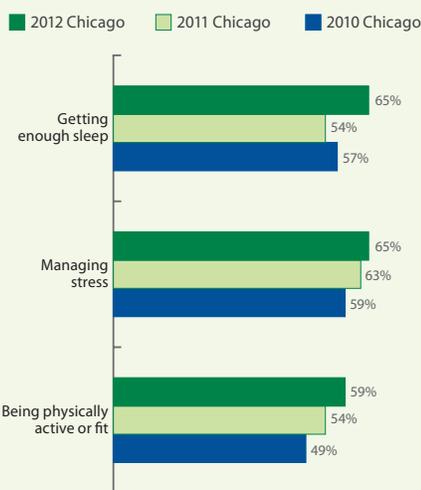
More Chicagoans this year appear to place importance on various aspects of well-being such as getting enough sleep (65 percent say this is extremely or very important vs. 54 percent in 2011 and 57 percent in 2010); managing stress (65 percent vs. 63 percent in 2011 and 59 percent in 2010) and being physically active or fit (59 percent vs. 54 percent in 2011 and 49 percent in 2010).

Still, Chicagoans struggle to meet healthy living goals:

- Sixty-seven percent of Chicagoans say eating healthy is extremely or very important, yet just 38 percent say they do an excellent or very good job of it.
- Sixty-five percent of Chicago residents say getting enough sleep is extremely or very important, yet only 38 percent say they do an excellent or very good job.
- Sixty-five percent of Chicago residents say managing stress is extremely or very important, but fewer than half give themselves high marks for managing their stress (46 percent say they are doing an excellent or very good job).
- Fifty-nine percent of Chicagoans say being physically active or fit is extremely or very important, while just 33 percent say they do a good job of it — a 26 percentage-point gap.

MORE CHICAGOANS PLACE IMPORTANCE ON HEALTHY LIVING GOALS THAN IN PREVIOUS YEARS.

Percentage Who Say Important/Extremely Important: Chicago Trend



BASE: Chicago 2012 (n=209); Chicago 2011 (n=276); Chicago 2010 (n=208)
Q7005 How important are each of the following to you?

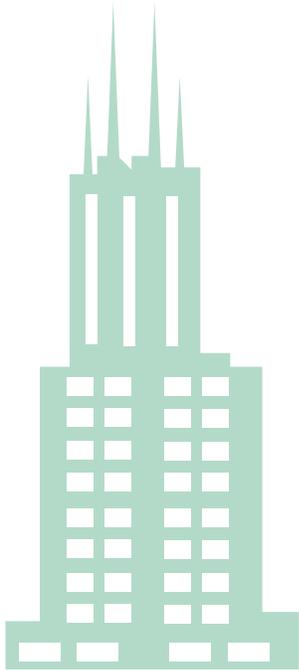
Health, Lifestyle and Behavior Change

Chicago residents who were recommended to or decided to make a lifestyle or behavior change continue to say that lack of willpower is a barrier preventing them from being successful. This figure is down from 2011.

Thirty percent of Chicagoans who have been recommended to or who have attempted to make a lifestyle or behavior change name lack of willpower as a barrier to lifestyle and behavior change. This barrier appears to be less of a problem for Chicagoans this year, however; the figure was 40 percent in 2011.



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Less than half of Chicago residents rate their physical health care as top-notch, and only about one-quarter say the same about their mental health care. In general, Americans do not have much confidence in their health care providers' ability to help them manage stress or make lifestyle or behavior changes, and Chicagoans are similar.

Thirty-seven percent of Chicago residents gave their physical health care an "A" grade and just 26 percent say the same about their mental health care.

Twenty-four percent of Chicagoans think their relationship with their current health care provider supports them a great deal or a lot in managing their stress and 34 percent think their relationship with their health care provider supports them a great deal or a lot in their desire to make healthy lifestyle changes.

While 38 percent of Chicagoans say discussing lifestyle and healthy behavior changes with their health care provider is extremely or very important, just 30 percent say those discussions occur always or often.

Twenty-eight percent of Chicagoans think discussing stress management with a health care provider is extremely or very important, yet less than 17 percent say they have this discussion often or always. Thirty-one percent of Chicago residents say it is extremely or very important to them that they discuss their mental health with their provider, yet only 15 percent say it happens often or always.
