



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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More people overweight

Last year just over four in ten Dutch people aged 20 years or older were overweight. Women and people with lower levels of education in particular were too heavy, according to the latest figures from Statistics Netherlands on health and lifestyle. The figures also show that one in five men can be considered to be a heavy drinker, and that about one in three people aged 16 or older smokes. The use of prescribed medication was about the same as in the year before. Three-quarters of the population visit their dentist at least once a year.

Obesity increasing

In 1999 just over four in ten Dutch people aged 20 years or older were overweight. At the beginning of the eighties this number was just over three in ten. Nearly nine out of every one hundred people are seriously obese, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands. More women have weight problems than men, and obesity is more common among people with lower education levels. Over half of people with lower educational levels are too heavy, compared with one in three people with a higher education.

Heavy drinkers mostly men

In 1999 86% of the population aged 16 and older drank alcoholic beverages. Just over one in five men can be considered to be heavy drinkers, compared with one in twenty women. Heavy drinkers are people who drink six or more units of alcohol at least one day a week.

Fewer male smokers

The difference in smoking behaviour between men and women has diminished in the last ten years. In 1999 36% of men aged 16 and older smoked, this is down from 44% ten years ago. Three in ten women were

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smokers last year, about the same proportion as ten years ago.

Use of prescribed medication nearly unchanged

In 1999 one in three people had used some sort of medication prescribed by a doctor in the two weeks preceding the survey. The use of prescribed medicines increased steadily between 1984 and 1995. Since then it has been fairly constant. Relatively more women than men use prescribed medication.

More visits to the dentist

More and more people have been making dental appointments in the last twenty years. While in 1981 six out of ten people visited their dentists at least once a year, in 1999 this had risen to three in four. Three quarters of the population also visited their family doctor in 1999. There are differences between how often men and women visit their family doctors: eight out of ten women and seven out of ten men consulted their GP in 1999.

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