



Press release

PB06-034
21 March 2006
9:30 AM

Dutch lead a slightly more healthy life

The percentage of overweight Dutch adults fell for the first time in years in 2005, among both men and women. More Dutch people also complied with the norm for healthy exercise. The percentage of smokers and heavy drinkers among young people was slightly lower than in previous years, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands.

No further increase in obesity

The steady increase in the number of overweight adults, i.e. a body mass index (BMI) of more than 25, which had been observed since 1981 came to a halt in 2005. Last year 45 percent of the adult population were overweight. This is slightly less than in the two previous years. In 1981, 33 percent of the population were overweight.

The percentage of overweight people dropped particularly in the age group 20-35 years in 2005. For the over 55s the percentage of overweight people did continue to rise.

One in ten people were seriously obese in 2005 (BMI more than 30). This is about the same proportion as in the previous two years.

More people take enough exercise

Last year 55 percent of the population aged 12 years and older took enough exercise according to the Dutch norm for healthy exercise. This is slightly up on the average in the period 2001-2004. The percentage was significantly lower than average for teenagers between 12 and 18 years. Only 33 percent of boys and 22 percent of girls in this age group met the norm for healthy physical exercise for their ages.

Fewer young smokers and young heavy drinkers

Just as in 2004, nearly 30 percent of people aged 12 years and older smoked in 2005. The percentage of smokers did not continue to decrease therefore. The decrease was observed for young people, both men and women, aged 12 to 25 years. In 2005 23 percent of this age group smoked, in 2004 this was still 25 percent. The percentage hardly changed for people aged 25 years and older. Most smokers, over 35 percent, are aged 25-44 years.

One in five people aged 12 years and older never drinks alcohol, while 11 percent belong to the category heavy drinkers. Most heavy drinkers are men. The percentage of excessive drinkers was slightly lower than in previous years. There are fewer excessive drinkers among people aged 12 to 25 years.