



Press release

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Improvement in healthy lifestyle stagnating

- **Percentage of smokers remains unchanged**
- **Number of heavy drinkers falls slightly**
- **Just over half the population get enough exercise**
- **Obesity remains at the same level**

According to figures from Statistics Netherlands, the lifestyle of the Dutch population hardly improved in terms of health last year. They did not make much progress with trying to smoke less, drink less, eat less and exercise more. The positive trend in smoking and exercise observed in recent years has been slowed down. Percentages of overweight and seriously obese people have hardly changed in recent years.

In 2008, 28 percent of the Dutch population aged 12 years and older smoked, just as many as in 2007. For women the percentage was 24, for men 31. Seen over a longer period, the decreasing trend is still visible for both men and women. This is also the case for the number of heavy smokers. Relatively more men than women are heavy smokers (8 and 5 percent respectively).

One in ten Dutch people aged 12 years and older belong to the group of heavy drinkers: at least six units of alcoholic at least once a week. In 2001 this was still nearly 14 percent. Since 2001 there has been a slightly decreasing trend in the percentage of heavy drinkers. This decrease is observed for both men and women in all age groups to 65 years.

The percentage of heavy drinkers among women (4 percent) is more than four times as low as among men (17 percent).

One in five Dutch people do not drink alcohol at all. This figure has been constant for years. An increasing number of teenagers (12-18 years) do not drink alcohol: in 2008 this had risen to 53 percent, in 2001 it was still 45 percent.

The percentage of Dutch people aged 12 years and older who comply with the national norm for healthy exercise was 56, the same as in 2007. The slightly increasing trend since 2001 has begun to level out. Men and women take about the same amount of exercise, but boys aged between 12 and 17 years and men aged 55 years and older exercise more than their female peers. And older people are more likely to comply with the norm than youngsters: only

one in four children aged 12-17 years exercise enough, while two out of three people aged 55 years and older comply with the norm for their ages.

Just over four in ten Dutch men aged 20 years and older are moderately overweight. For women this is three in ten. The percentage of moderately overweight adults has been increasing since Statistics Netherlands started this survey in the 1980s, but since the turn of the century it has remained constant.

The number of seriously obese adults doubled from the early 1980s to 2005, since then it has hovered around 11 percent. Relatively more women than men are obese: 12 versus 10 percent. Above the age of 55, 14 percent of adults are obese, more than twice the percentage in the age group 20-34 years.