



Statistics Netherlands

# Press release

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## *Healthier lifestyle beyond many people's reach*

- Nearly one in two do not have enough exercise
- More than one in ten obese
- One in ten drink too much
- One in four smoke

The Dutch have not been very successful in recent years in their pursuit of a healthier lifestyle. In 2009, for example, the number of people doing enough exercise has not improved. The percentage of obese men has not been this high since lifestyle monitoring began. After a decline in recent years, the percentage of heavy drinkers has now levelled off. On the other hand, the number of smokers has declined marginally over a longer period of time, as the latest figures released by Statistics Netherlands show.

The number of people in the Netherlands getting a fair amount of healthy exercise on a regular basis appears to level off. Last year, the percentage of people aged 12 years or older in the Dutch population complying with the criteria of the Dutch Standard for Healthy Exercise was 56 percent, the same as in 2007 and 2008. The percentage levelled off across all age categories and both genders.

The results for moderate overweight among over-20s were more or less the same in 2009 as in 2008. Four in ten men and three in ten women were moderately overweight, but the percentage of obese adults continues to grow. The proportion of obese men (11.2 percent) has not been this high since monitoring began in 1981. The highest percentage of obesity patients is recorded among older people. The rate is one in six for female over-65s.

Excessive drinking in the Dutch population aged 12 years and older remained stable in 2009. One in ten are considered heavy drinkers. Heavy drinking is defined as drinking at least six glasses of alcohol at least once a week. Most heavy drinkers are found in the 12–24 age group. More than one in eight young people are included in the category heavy drinkers. In the past two years, the percentage of heavy drinkers in this age group appears to decline. One in five Dutch are teetotallers and this rate has been stable over a period of many years.

Last year, 27 percent of Dutch aged 12 years or older smoked, i.e. marginally below the level of 2008. This is predominantly caused by the fact that the

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percentage of smokers among women aged 25 and older was reduced. Overall, 23 percent of the female population are smokers, as against 31 percent in the male population. In the youngest age category (12-24), the proportion of smokers has remained unchanged at 23 percent over the past five years. In general, the percentage of male and female smokers has dropped marginally over the past decade. This also applies to heavy smokers (at least 20 cigarettes a day).