

**Contacts:**

Melissa Gibbs  
 (615) 614-4466  
[melissa.gibbs@healthways.com](mailto:melissa.gibbs@healthways.com)

Eric Nielsen  
 (202) 715-3030  
[Eric\\_nielsen@gallup.com](mailto:Eric_nielsen@gallup.com)

**IN U.S., HEALTH HABITS IMPROVING, BUT UPHILL CLIMB REMAINS**

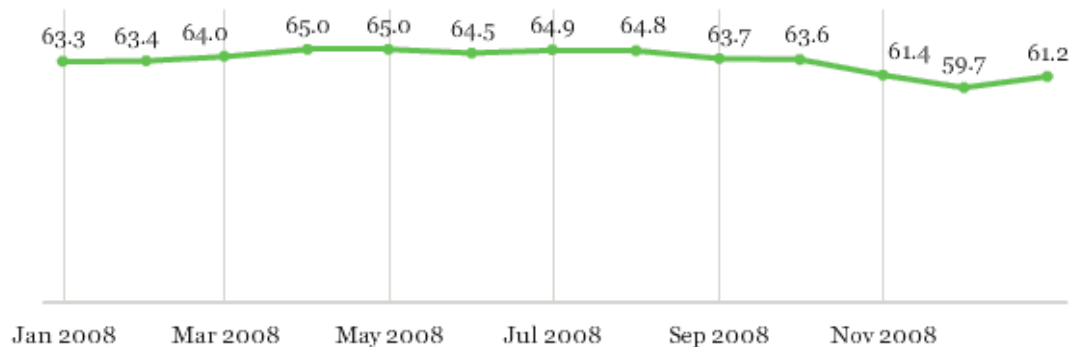
*Younger, lowest-income, and single Americans the least healthy*

**NASHVILLE, Tenn. and WASHINGTON, D.C., Feb. 17, 2009** – According to the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index™ (WBI), the health habits of many Americans are improving during this new year, but there's still a long way to go.

The WBI's Healthy Behavior sub-index, an in-depth measure of Americans' exercise, eating and smoking habits, rose to 61.2 in January; a slight reversal of the sharp decline that occurred at the end of 2008. Even with this uptick, the healthy behavior score is still considerably lower than the 63.3 recorded last January (See: Figure A).

**Figure A:**

***Healthy Behavior sub-index***



Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

The Healthy Behavior sub-index score includes four questions that look individually at smoking, healthy eating, weekly consumption of fruits and vegetables and weekly exercise frequency. In reviewing the trend for each individual item, Dr. Jim Harter, Gallup Chief Scientist for Workplace Management and Well-Being, reports that the movement in the overall Healthy Behavior sub-index score "is pretty clearly reflected in the eating healthy and exercise items," and that "the smoking rate has not changed much."

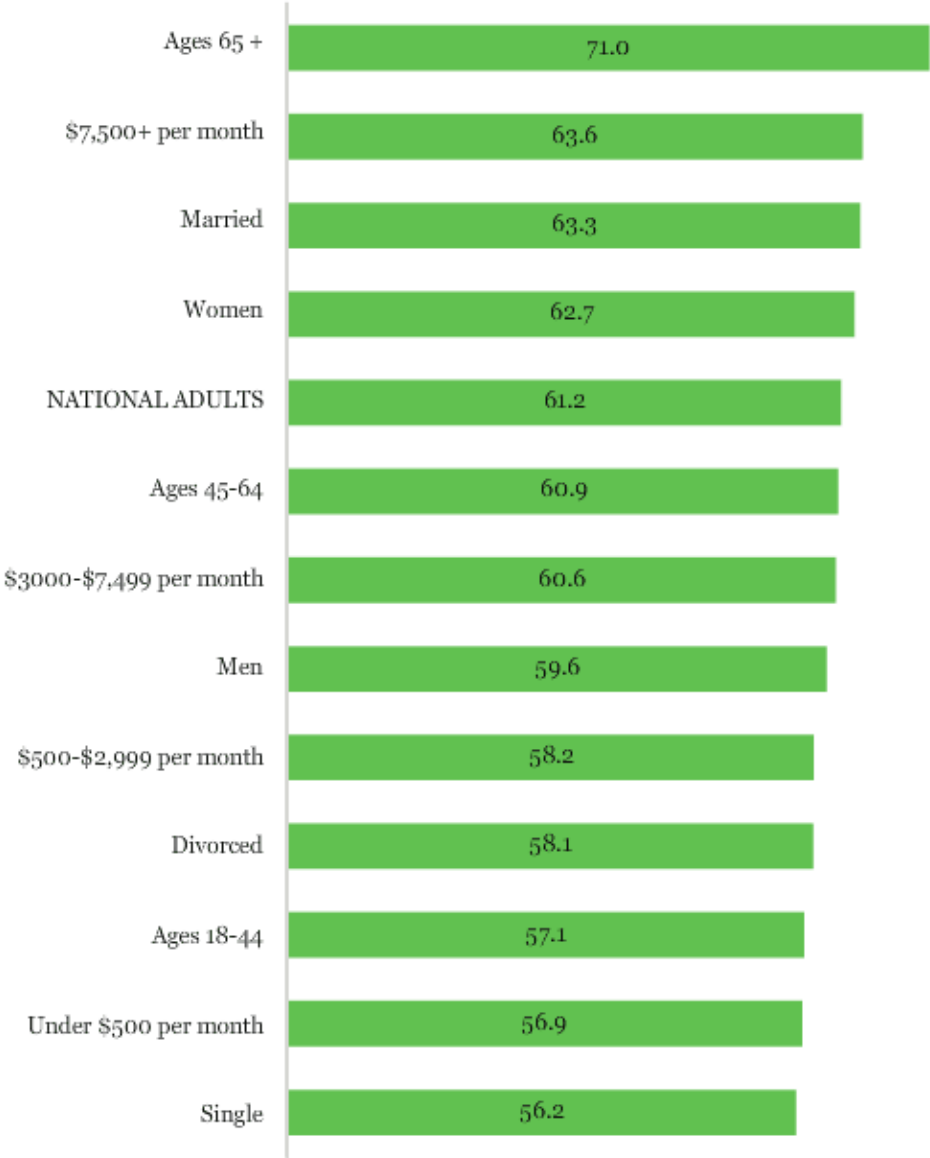
There may also be a seasonal effect related to the holidays and New Year's resolutions. At the same time, the year to year decline from January 2008 to January 2009 suggests the stress and financial strain of the recession may also be taking a toll on Americans' health.

**Health Report Cards Vary**

Assessing the current state of affairs in January 2009 finds older Americans to be much more likely than any other group to report healthy behaviors. Americans 65 years of age and older have a score of 71 on the Healthy Behavior sub-index, almost 10 points above the national average (See: Figure B). Women, people who are married, and those in the highest income bracket also have Healthy Behavior scores that are better than the national average. Younger Americans, those in the lowest income bracket, and single individuals are the least likely to report healthy behaviors.

**Figure B:**

*Healthy Behavior sub-index – January 2009*



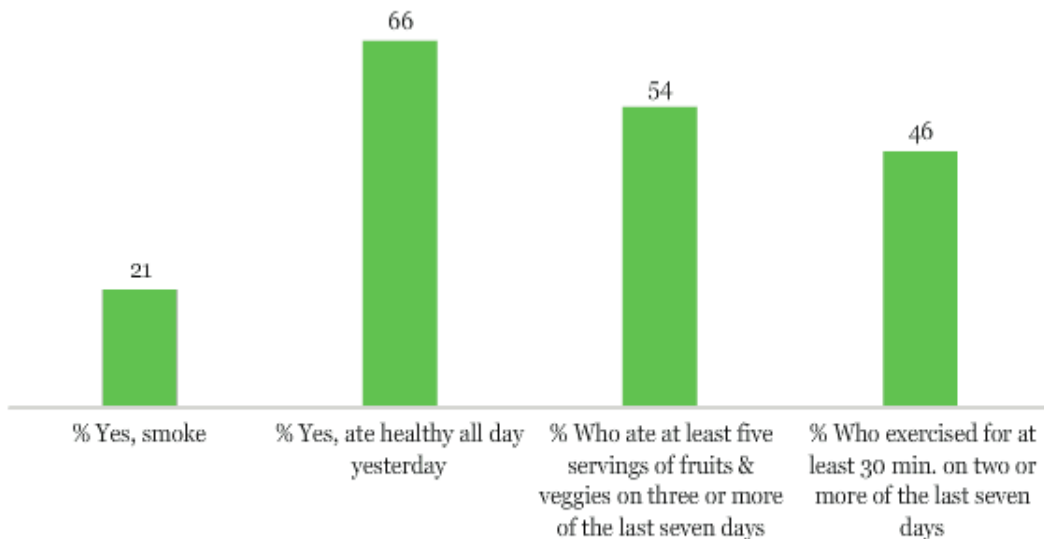
Aggregate of interviews conducted Jan. 1-31, 2009  
Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

## A Steep Climb to Better Health

Looking specifically at each of the questions that compose the Healthy Behavior sub-index reveals large percentages of Americans are not eating healthily and getting appropriate amounts of exercise (See: Figure C). In the first month of 2009 less than half of Americans (46%) said that in the last seven days they had exercised on two or more of those days for at least 30 minutes.

**Figure C:**

### *Individual Healthy Behavior sub-index questions*



Aggregate of interviews conducted Jan. 1-31, 2009

FULL QUESTION WORDING: 1.) Do you smoke? 2.) Did you eat healthy all day yesterday? 3.) In the last seven days, on how many days did you: Have five or more servings of fruits and vegetables? 4.) In the last seven days, on how many days did you: Exercise for 30 or more minutes?

For full demographic breakouts on each of the individual Healthy Behavior sub-index questions, (See: Figure D) below.

While two-thirds of respondents (66%) said they ate healthily all day "yesterday," a smaller number, 54%, reported that in the last seven days they had eaten at least five servings of fruits and vegetables on three or more of those days. This disconnect may mean that for many Americans the definition of what eating healthily is could be unclear and that they are unaware of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommended servings of fruits and vegetables.

As Americans continue to struggle under the weight of the economic crisis, Amy Neftzger, Healthways Lead Researcher, points to the importance of raising awareness about healthy eating habits during times of undue stress. Neftzger says that in stressful situations "some individuals are prone to 'stress eating' and either overeat or resort to comfort foods, and these comfort foods tend to be higher in fat and caloric content than healthier choices, such as a salad."

Another important component of the Healthy Behavior sub-index is the smoking rate. In this analysis of January 2009 data, 21% of Americans say that they smoke. The smoking rate is currently highest among very low income Americans (34%) and lowest for those aged 65 and older (11%).

### Bottom Line

The increase in the Healthy Behavior sub-index in January, though small, is a positive sign that, even amid one of the worst economic downturns in the nation's history, Americans are continuing to place importance on their health. Eating healthily and exercising more may, in fact, play a vital role in raising an individual's well-being and helping to deal with stress. With just 46% of the population saying they exercise relatively frequently and slightly more than half reporting eating the weekly recommended servings of fruits and vegetables, it is clear that millions of Americans are in need of continued education and encouragement around critical healthy behaviors.

Neftzger notes, "Healthy behaviors have been linked to disease prevention and increased quality of life. With the prevalence rates of conditions such as diabetes on the increase, we should strive to improve the national Healthy Behavior sub-index score each year so that we can improve the health of the nation."

### Full Demographic Results

**Figure D:**

*Do you smoke?*

	<b>% Yes</b>	<b>% No</b>
National Adults	21	79
Women	19	81
Men	23	76
Ages 18-44	24	76
Ages 45-64	24	76
Ages 65+	11	89
Under \$500 per month	34	66
\$500-\$2,999 per month	29	71
\$3,000-\$7,499 per month	19	81
\$7,500+ per month	13	87
Single	27	73
Married	16	84
Divorced	31	69

*Did you eat healthy all day yesterday?*

	<b>% Yes</b>	<b>% No</b>
National Adults	66	34
Women	66	34
Men	66	33
Ages 18-44	57	43
Ages 45-64	67	33
Ages 65+	84	16
Under \$500 per month	68	32
\$500-\$2,999 per month	66	34
\$3,000-\$7,499 per month	62	38
\$7,500+ per month	63	37
Single	57	43
Married	68	32
Divorced	64	36

*In the last seven days, on how many days did you:  
Have five or more servings of fruits and vegetables?*

	<b>% &lt;3 Days</b>	<b>% 3+ Days</b>
National Adults	46	54
Women	40	60
Men	52	48
Ages 18-44	53	47
Ages 45-64	44	56
Ages 65+	33	67
Under \$500 per month	53	47
\$500-\$2,999 per month	46	54
\$3,000-\$7,499 per month	46	53
\$7,500+ per month	47	53
Single	54	46
Married	44	56
Divorced	45	55

*In the last seven days, on how many days did you:  
Exercise for 30 or more minutes?*

	<b>% &lt;2 Days</b>	<b>% 2+ Days</b>
National Adults	54	46
Women	56	44
Men	53	47
Ages 18-44	53	47
Ages 45-64	56	44
Ages 65+	56	44
Under \$500 per month	53	46
\$500-\$2,999 per month	58	42
\$3,000-\$7,499 per month	54	46
\$7,500+ per month	49	51
Single	51	49
Married	55	45
Divorced	55	44

### **Survey Methods**

For the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, Gallup is interviewing no fewer than 1,000 U.S. adults nationwide each day. Monthly results comprise roughly 30,000 interviews. For results based on these samples, the maximum margin of sampling error is  $\pm 2$  percentage points.

Interviews are conducted with respondents on land-line telephones (for respondents with a land-line telephone) and cellular phones (for respondents who are cell-phone only).

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

### **About the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index™**

The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index is the first and largest survey of its kind, with 1,000 calls a day, seven days a week. It is the official statistic for Well-Being in America, giving a daily measure of people's well-being at the close of every day based on the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health as not only the absence of infirmity and disease but also a state of physical, mental and social well-being. The Well-Being Index will be a daily measure determining the correlation between the places where people work and the communities in which they live, and how that and other factors impact their well-being. Additionally, The Well-Being Index will increase the understanding of how those factors impact the financial health of corporations and communities.

For more information, please visit: [www.well-beingindex.com](http://www.well-beingindex.com).

**About Healthways**

Healthways (NASDAQ: HWAY) is the leading provider of specialized, comprehensive solutions to help millions of people maintain or improve their health and well-being and, as a result, reduce overall costs. Healthways' solutions are designed to help healthy individuals stay healthy, mitigate and slow the progression of disease associated with family or lifestyle risk factors and promote the best possible health for those already affected by disease. Our proven, evidence-based programs provide highly specific and personalized interventions for each individual in a population, irrespective of age or health status, and are delivered to consumers by phone, mail, internet and face-to-face interactions, both domestically and internationally. Healthways also provides a national, fully accredited complementary and alternative Health Provider Network, offering convenient access to individuals who seek health services outside of, and in conjunction with, the traditional healthcare system. For more information, please visit [www.healthways.com](http://www.healthways.com).

**About Gallup**

Gallup has studied human nature and behavior for more than 70 years. Gallup's reputation for delivering relevant, timely, and visionary research on what people around the world think and feel is the cornerstone of the organization. Gallup employs many of the world's leading scientists in management, economics, psychology, and sociology, and our consultants assist leaders in identifying and monitoring behavioral economic indicators worldwide. Gallup consultants also help organizations boost organic growth by increasing customer engagement and maximizing employee productivity through measurement tools, coursework, and strategic advisory services. Gallup's 2,000 professionals deliver services at client organizations, through the Web, at Gallup University's campuses, and in 40 offices around the world. For more information go to [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).

-END-