

# Healthy Eating Active Living

Healthy Eating and Active Living are essential in the prevention and control of chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and high blood pressure. These chronic diseases contribute to the leading causes of death nationally and here in St. Mary's County. By focusing on healthy eating and maintaining a physically active lifestyle, residents can help prevent these chronic diseases (and many other conditions) as well as the complications associated with them. When communities focus on strategies to support healthy eating and active living for their residents, they improve population health and minimize the financial burden associated with chronic diseases.

The Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) action team of the Healthy St. Mary's Partnership brings together community organizations and residents to coordinate local action around healthy eating, active living, and weight management. HEAL partners are implementing strategies that promote healthy eating and active living in our county. These strategies focus on promoting workplace wellness, healthy eating and exercise in school settings, creating a built environment within St. Mary's County that supports active living, and helping individuals make healthy eating and active living part of their lifestyles. **Visit [healthystmarys.com](http://healthystmarys.com) to learn more about this and other Healthy St. Mary's Partnership action teams.**

## Selected objectives and indicators:

While numerous wellness and prevention related issues for people of all ages are being addressed in the Healthy St. Mary's 2020 Plan, two objectives with associated indicators addressing adult wellness are included here:

- Regular physical activity can improve the health and quality of life of Americans of all ages, regardless of the presence of a chronic disease or disability, and can lower the risk of multiple conditions including cancer, depression, heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. Figure 1 shows the percentage of adults who reported at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity or at least 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week, as recommended by the American Heart Association.
- Promoting health and reducing chronic disease risk through the consumption of healthful diets and achievement and maintenance of healthy body weights are central to the HEAL mission. Maintaining a healthy weight can prevent 40 percent of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes, and can aid in the control of these conditions if they develop. This indicator shows the percentage of adults who are at a healthy weight (Figure 2).



Figure 1. Adults who are physically active\*, 2013<sup>1</sup>

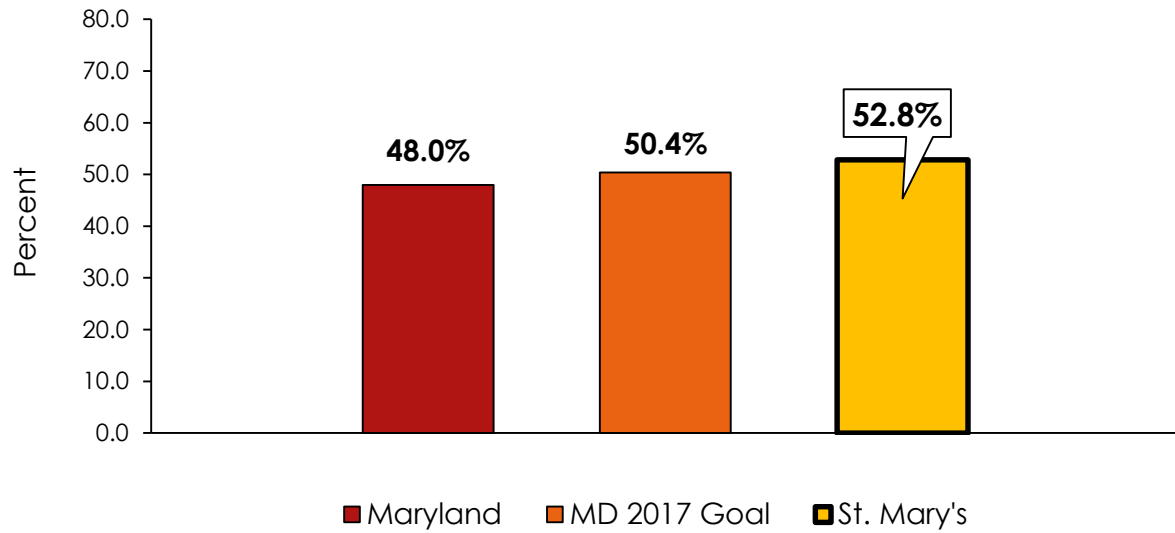
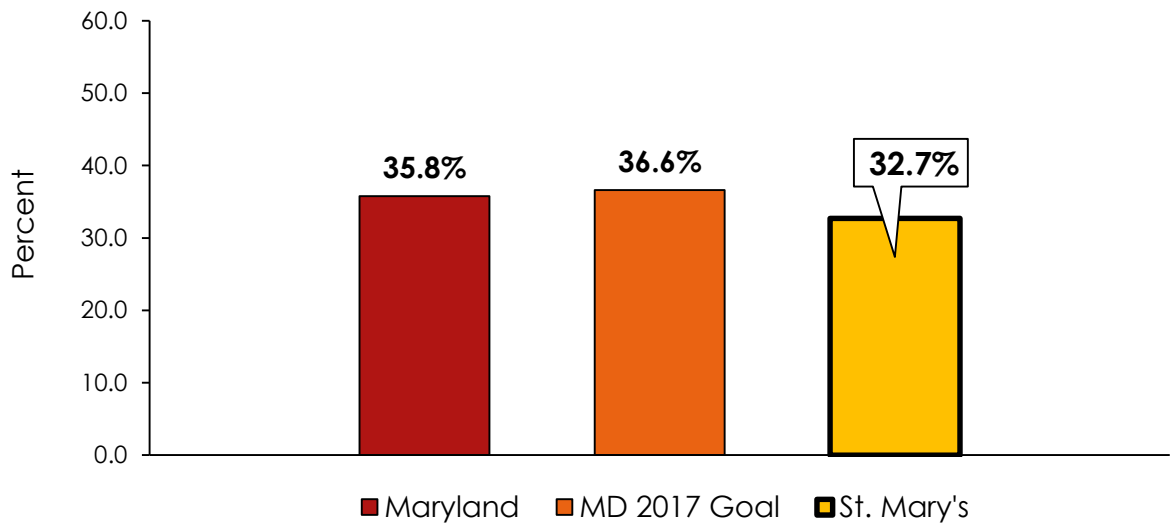


Figure 2. Adults who maintain a healthy weight†, 2013<sup>1</sup>



1. Maryland DHMH Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

\*Either 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise per week. † Body Mass Index less than 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup>

