

Environments Matter



Black Americans are challenged with food environments that encourage eating large amounts of food – especially foods that are high in calories, fat, and sugar.

The economic environment does not promote healthy eating due to the higher cost of many healthier foods and the relatively lower cost of unhealthy foods.

Environments in which we live, work and play shape our actions and views.

Black Americans are not just naturally larger but still healthy.

Many Black Americans do not even realize that their weight may put their health at risk.

- People with larger body sizes may be viewed positively, as shapely or strong. This poses a challenge to creating awareness of the importance of weight control.
- Black Americans are more likely than White Americans to have obesity-related conditions like type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

Due to modern advances and changes in the environment, people are very inactive at work, school and home.

Concerns about crime, traffic, the lack of recreational spaces or costs of access may influence options for physical activity.

Advertisements for fast food and sugary beverages featuring Black actors or athletes are channeled to Black communities. This maintains an environment dominated by messages for unhealthy eating.

- Food companies market high calorie products to Black Americans more heavily than to White Americans.
- Black American youth are more likely than their peers to report frequent consumption of sweetened drinks and fast food — common sources of excess calories.

There are opportunities to celebrate the positive aspects of Black American food traditions, educate Black communities to recognize problems with food marketing and work with community business owners to find profitable ways to promote a healthier mix of products.

Opportunities exist to make neighborhoods more appealing for physical activity. Family and community partnerships can help support a safe environment.



The African American Collaborative Obesity Research Network (AACORN) is a national network that brings together African American and other interested researchers, researchers-in-training, and community-based research partners to develop innovative, holistic, and sustainable strategies for obesity prevention and control in Black American communities. www.AACORN.org