Poor neighborhood safety has been associated with poor health outcomes in adults. Research has shown that a lack of neighborhood safety is associated with obesity, low physical activity, increased tobacco use in pregnant women, depression in Korean adults, and decreased adherence to diabetes self-management among adult type 2 diabetics. Overall, adults who perceive their neighborhoods to be unsafe may be less able to participate in low-cost activities (i.e., walking) and may experience increased stress. These factors may in turn lead to maladaptive coping and an inability to manage their health.

In California, White adults were more likely to report feeling safe in their neighborhood all or most of the time (95.5%), followed by the Multiracial group (94.1%), Asians/Others (89.9%), African Americans (86.3%), and Latinos (84.9%) (see Figure).

In the California Medi-Cal population, White adults were more likely to report feeling safe in their neighborhood all or most of the time (88.4%), followed by African Americans (81.2%), the Multiracial group (80.4%), Asians/Others (79.9%), and Latinos (78.3%). Regardless of race/ethnicity, the Medi-Cal population reported lower rates of feeling safe in their neighborhood as compared to the general California population.

Figure

Perceived Neighborhood Safety among California and Medi-Cal Adults, by Race/Ethnicity, 2009

Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2009.