

# Risk Factors for Immigrants in Nebraska

 **Fact Sheet**

**Nebraska DHHS Office of Health  
Disparities and Health Equity**

*Source: Nebraska Behavioral Risk Factor  
Surveillance System (BRFSS) 2011-2015*



**NEBRASKA**  
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DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

# Immigrants in Nebraska Risk Factor Fact Sheet

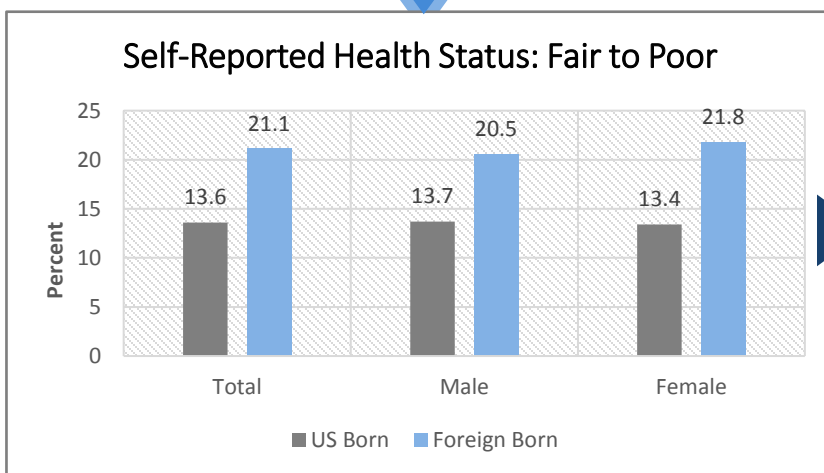
## Overview

In 2015, approximately 43.3 million immigrants resided in the United States, accounting for 13.5% of the total population. This number is rapidly increasing and has quadrupled from 9.6 million in 1970.<sup>1</sup> Immigrants often face unique obstacles to accessing quality healthcare due to language, cultural and socioeconomic barriers. Understanding the disparities between the US-born and foreign-born populations is an important step in addressing how the health care system can become more inclusive and accessible to immigrants.

## Perceived Health Status

Perceived health status measures how an individual views his or her health – excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor. Individuals who are poor or uninsured are more likely to report being in fair or poor health and have higher rates of hospitalization and mortality compared to those who report excellent or good health. The perceived health status indicator is useful in making broad comparisons across populations that allow for diverse conditions.

The below chart shows that the foreign-born population (21.1%) was more likely to report being in fair to poor health than the US-born population (13.6%), a difference of 7.5 percentage points. The disparity was similar in both the male and female populations.



## Methodology

The information in this report was obtained through the Nebraska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), which collects data on the prevalence of health risk factors among adults residing in the state. The surveillance system is based on a research design developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## Key Disparities

While data shows that immigrants generally have less access to health care and are less likely to seek preventative care, newer immigrants are less likely to have chronic diseases or be obese. However, with longer residence in the U.S., immigrants tend to adopt unhealthy behaviors that may lead to chronic diseases and obesity.

# 29.9%

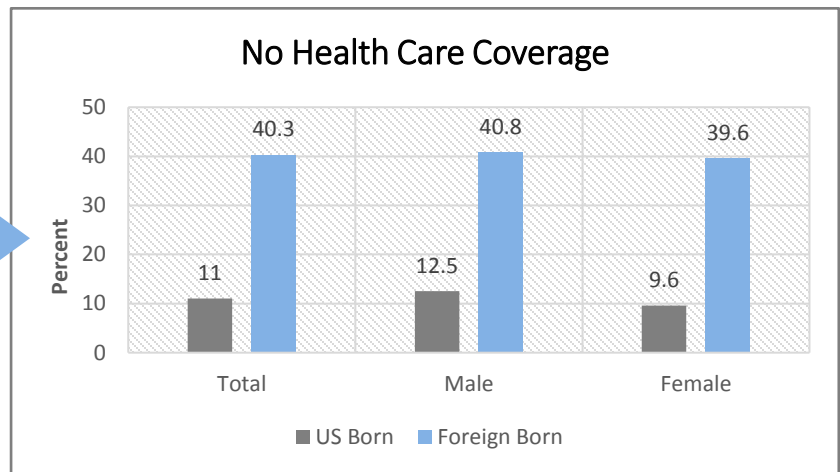
Approximately 30% of foreign-born Hispanics reported a health status of fair to poor, a higher percentage than any other population. This proportion was almost 2.5 times the proportion of US-born Whites who reported the same at 12.6%.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). American Community Survey.

# Access to Health Care

## No Health Insurance

Individuals without health care coverage are less likely to receive appropriate preventative care or have a primary care provider. Individuals without insurance are also often unable to get needed care, as they are financially unable to pay for health services. In Nebraska, the proportion of the foreign-born population (40.3%) without health care was over 3.5 times greater than the proportion of the US-born population (11%) without health care.



Foreign-born Nebraskans were almost four times more likely than US-born Nebraskans to have no health care coverage.

**3.7x**

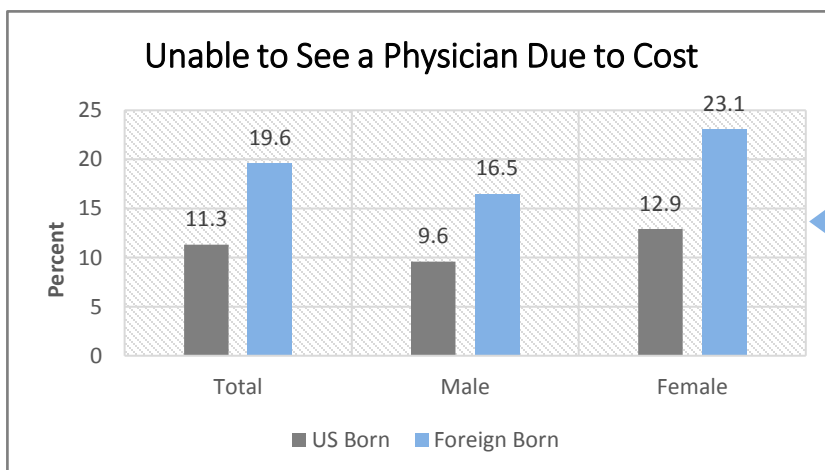
Two out of every five foreign-born Nebraskans had no personal physician.



**57%**

Over half of the foreign-born Hispanic population had no health care coverage.

## Unable to See a Physician Due to Cost



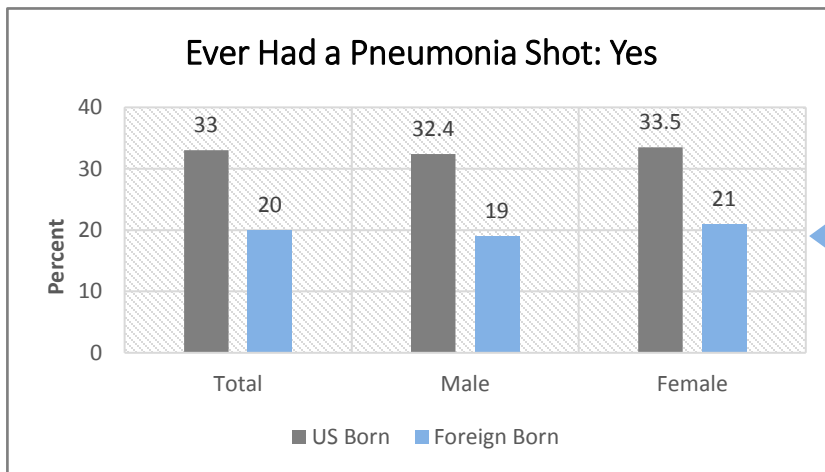
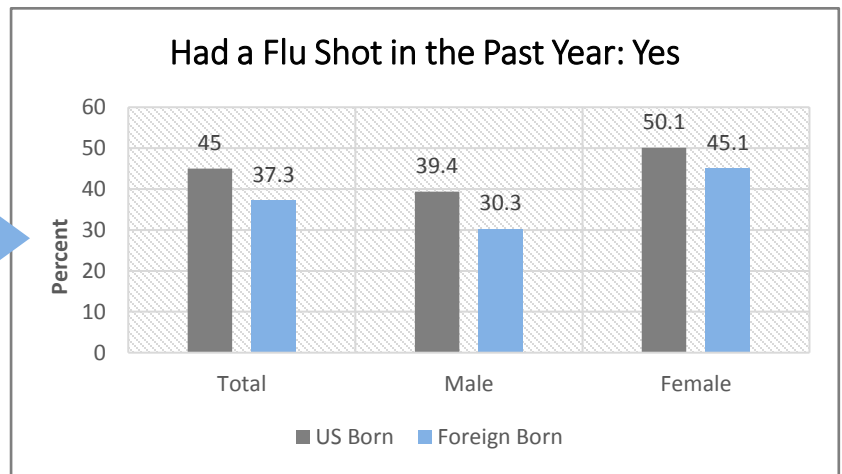
For individuals with no insurance or limited financial resources, the decision of whether or not to see a doctor is often a financial choice rather than a medical one. Approximately one-fifth (19.6%) of foreign-born individuals reported being unable to see a doctor due to cost, compared to only just over one-tenth (11.3%) of US-born individuals.

# Preventative Care

## Flu & Pneumonia Shots

### Flu Shot

Flu shots protect individuals against the most common influenza viruses and are recommended for everyone over six months of age each influenza season. Half of US-born females (50.1%) had a flu shot within the last year, compared to 45.1% of foreign-born females. Just over 39% of US-born males reported having had a flu shot within the last year, compared to only 30% of foreign-born males.

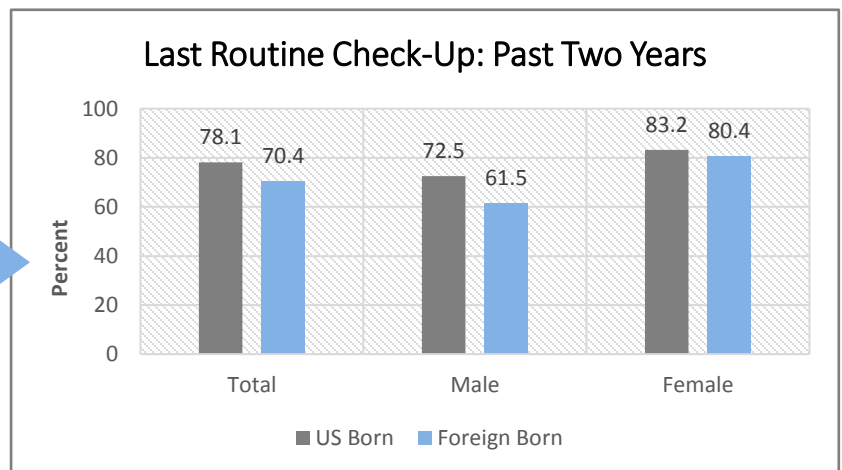


### Pneumonia Shot

A pneumonia shot or pneumococcal vaccine is usually given only once or twice in an individual's lifetime and is different from a flu shot. This chart represents those 65 and older who have ever had a pneumonia shot. Approximately one-third of the US-born population (33%) reported having ever had a pneumonia shot, compared to only one-fifth of the foreign-born population (20%).

## Routine Check-Up

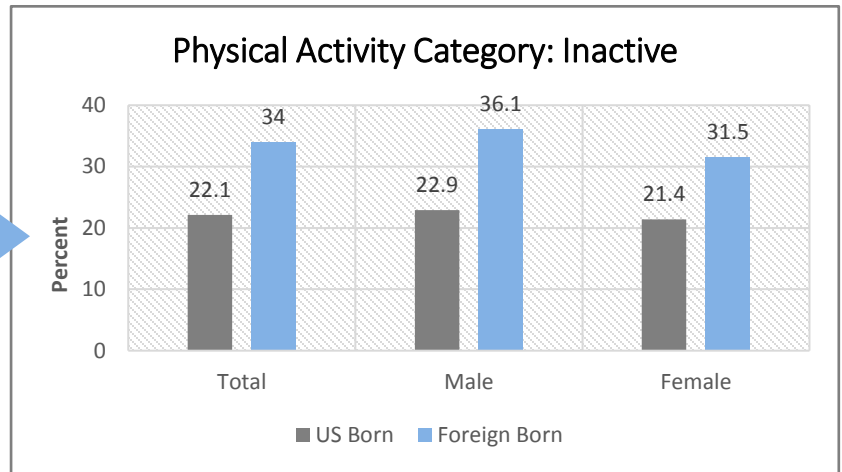
Routine check-ups are helpful in finding problems before they become a cause for concern. The proportion of the US-born population (78.1%) that had a routine check-up in the past two years was approximately eight percentage points larger than the proportion of the foreign-born population (70.4%) that reported the same.



# Risk Factors for Illness

## Physical Inactivity

Physical inactivity refers to those individuals who had no leisure-time physical activity in the past month. There was a large difference between the proportions of US and foreign-born populations that reported being physically inactive. While 22.1% of US-born individuals reported being physically inactive, 34% of foreign-born individuals reported the same.



Foreign-born Nebraskans were approximately 1.5 times more likely to be physically inactive, compared to US-born Nebraskans.

**1.5x**

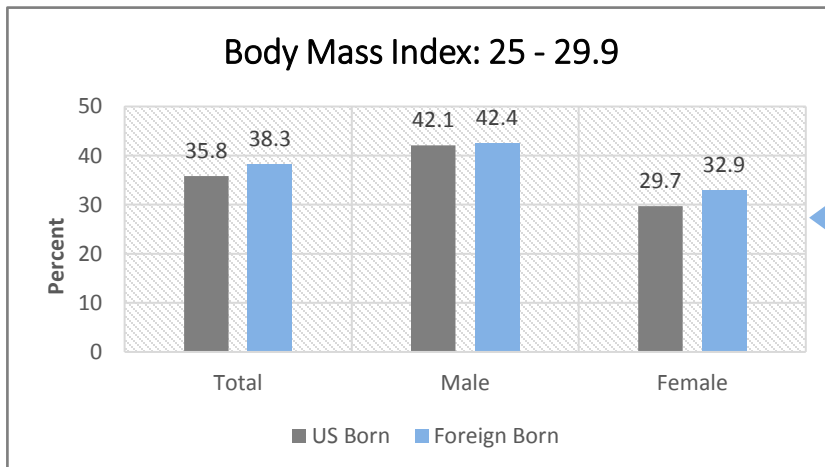
Two out of every five foreign-born Hispanics reported being overweight.



**38.3%**

Approximately two-fifths of the foreign-born population reported being overweight.

## Overweight



Body Mass Index (BMI) is an estimated measure of an adult's body fat, which is determined by the ratio of one's height and weight. Individuals with a BMI of 25-29.9 are considered overweight. There was a 2.5 percentage point difference in the proportions of overweight US-born and foreign-born individuals, with the proportion of overweight foreign-born individuals (38.3%) being slightly higher than the proportion of US-born individuals (35.8%).