

# Adult Obesity

Obesity rates are climbing fast. It is no exaggeration to call this an epidemic.

- ▶ In 1997, only four states reported obesity rates above 20 percent. Just ten years later, only Colorado still had an obesity rate below 20 percent and five states reported obesity rates above 30 percent according to CDC data.
- ▶ Just one third of Americans are considered normal weight. In addition to the 26.3 percent of all Americans who are obese, another 36.7 percent are overweight.
- ▶ In 2007, African-Americans were less likely to have normal weight (32.1%) than Hispanic adults (38.3%) or whites (40.5%), while the majority of Asians (62.3%) were of normal weight.
- ▶ Overall, men are more likely to be overweight or obese than women, nearly 7 in 10 men compared to 5 in 10 women.<sup>1</sup>



Obesity is linked to many chronic diseases and is an economic drain on our nation.

- ▶ Being obese is a risk factor for many chronic diseases and health conditions, including: type 2 diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, heart disease and stroke.
- ▶ Obesity accounts for approximately 112,000 excess deaths per year.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ National estimates for the health care and other costs related to obesity ranged from \$98 billion to \$124 billion in 2004.
- ▶ Increases in obesity prevalence alone accounted for 12 percent of the growth in health care spending between 1987 and 2001.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Obesity costs U.S. companies nearly \$13 billion every year according to CSG research. These costs include health insurance costs, paid sick leave, life insurance and disability insurance.

Communities, states, and workplaces are responding with programs to reduce obesity and achieve wellness.

- ▶ About 60 percent of states require teaching physical activity and fitness in schools, according to the latest survey in the Journal of School Health.
- ▶ At least seven states—Hawaii, Iowa, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Wisconsin – have introduced bills to create tax credits to offset employers' expenses to establish employee wellness programs.
- ▶ Comprehensive workplace health programs result in a \$3 to \$6 return on investment (ROI) for each dollar invested. Savings are typically realized in about two to five years.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ States and communities are making investments to bring healthy foods to low-income neighborhoods. Pennsylvania, California, Connecticut, New York, New Mexico, Kentucky, and Louisiana have programs to encourage grocery stores and farmers' markets.

<sup>1</sup> StateHealthFacts.org, Kaiser Family Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Flegal KM, Graubard BI, Williamson DF, Gail MH. "Excess deaths associated with underweight, overweight, and obesity." *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2005 Apr 20; 293(15):1861–7.

<sup>3</sup> Thorpe, Kenneth E. et al. "The Impact of Obesity on Rising Medical Spending." *Health Affairs*, October 20, 2004 from <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/full/hlthaff.w4.480/DC1> accessed on October 16, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Wicklan, P. et al. "Bridges to Excellence: Cardiac Care Analysis—Savings Estimates." PowerPoint presentation at Leapfrog Group/ National Business Coalition on Health Incentives and Rewards Workshop; May 19, 2005; Washington, D.C.

## STATE RANKINGS ON ADULT OBESITY RATES AND RELATED FACTORS

State	Adult Obesity 1997	Adult Obesity 2007	Adult Obesity 2007 Rank	Adults Diagnosed w/Diabetes 2007	Adults Diagnosed w/Diabetes 2007 Rank	Adults w/o Recommended Physical Activity 2007	Physical Inactivity 2007 Rank
United States	16.6%	26.3%	N.A.	8.1%	N.A.	50.8%	N.A.
Alabama	18.2%	30.9%	2	10.3%	5	58.3%	6
Alaska	19.7%	28.2%	13	6.1%	51	39.2%	54
Arizona	12.4%	25.8%	31	8.4%	24	47.6%	38
Arkansas	18.1%	29.3%	6	9.2%	13	54.1%	10
California	16.0%	23.3%	45	7.6%	35	49.8%	32
Colorado	11.8%	19.3%	54	5.3%	54	45.3%	45
Connecticut	14.7%	21.7%	50	7.3%	37	47.6%	38
Delaware	18.8%	28.2%	13	8.7%	20	52.1%	17
District of Columbia	14.5%	22.2%	47	8.1%	27	46.1%	43
Florida	16.1%	24.1%	43	8.7%	20	52.7%	14
Georgia	14.4%	28.7%	9	10.1%	9	51.8%	19
Guam	N.A.	24.6%	40	9.2%	13	50.5%	28
Hawaii	13.6%	21.7%	50	7.7%	34	49.0%	35
Idaho	16.3%	25.1%	37	7.9%	31	44.2%	47
Illinois	17.1%	25.6%	32	8.8%	17	51.3%	23
Indiana	21.2%	27.4%	21	8.5%	23	52.4%	15
Iowa	19.4%	27.7%	19	6.8%	46	51.6%	21
Kansas	14.7%	27.7%	19	7.3%	37	51.5%	22
Kentucky	21.8%	28.7%	9	9.9%	10	55.8%	8
Louisiana	19.6%	30.7%	3	10.2%	7	61.4%	2
Maine	16.2%	25.2%	36	7.8%	32	44.0%	48
Maryland	17.5%	26.3%	26	8.4%	24	51.8%	19
Massachusetts	14.8%	21.7%	50	7.4%	36	48.6%	36
Michigan	19.3%	28.2%	13	8.8%	17	49.3%	34
Minnesota	16.5%	26.0%	29	5.7%	53	51.1%	25
Mississippi	22.0%	32.6%	1	11.1%	3	60.4%	4
Missouri	19.1%	28.2%	13	8.0%	28	51.2%	24
Montana	14.6%	22.6%	46	6.6%	48	42.0%	53
Nebraska	17.0%	26.5%	25	7.1%	41	48.0%	37
Nevada	14.1%	24.6%	40	8.0%	28	51.1%	25
New Hampshire	14.2%	25.1%	37	7.2%	37	46.0%	44
New Jersey	16.0%	24.1%	43	9.2%	13	51.9%	18
New Mexico	14.9%	25.1%	37	7.8%	32	46.7%	41
New York	16.0%	25.5%	33	8.2%	26	51.1%	25
North Carolina	18.3%	28.7%	9	9.1%	16	56.0%	7
North Dakota	17.0%	27.0%	23	6.3%	50	47.3%	40
Ohio	17.7%	28.1%	17	9.5%	12	50.0%	31
Oklahoma	15.1%	28.8%	8	10.2%	7	54.5%	9
Oregon	19.4%	26.3%	26	6.9%	45	43.7%	50
Pennsylvania	17.5%	27.8%	18	8.7%	20	49.6%	33
Puerto Rico	19.0%	26.6%	24	12.5%	1	69.1%	1
Rhode Island	13.8%	21.7%	50	7.2%	37	50.1%	30
South Carolina	16.9%	29.0%	7	9.6%	11	53.5%	12
South Dakota	17.0%	27.2%	22	6.7%	47	52.2%	16
Tennessee	17.7%	30.7%	3	11.9%	2	61.2%	3
Texas	18.7%	28.6%	12	10.3%	5	53.5%	12
Utah	15.2%	22.4%	47	5.8%	52	43.8%	49
Vermont	15.9%	21.9%	49	7.0%	43	42.4%	52
Virgin Islands	N.A.	26.3%	26	8.8%	17	59.6%	5
Virginia	16.4%	25.3%	34	8.0%	28	50.5%	28
Washington	15.2%	25.9%	30	7.1%	41	46.3%	42
West Virginia	20.6%	30.3%	5	10.8%	4	54.1%	10
Wisconsin	16.6%	25.3%	34	6.5%	49	44.9%	46
Wyoming	15.0%	24.5%	42	7.0%	43	43.3%	51

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data, 1997–2007. Rankings calculated by The Council of State Governments.

Notes: (1) State rankings assign one to the highest obesity percentage, the highest diabetes percentage and the highest percentage of adults reporting they do not engage in recommended levels of physical activity. (2) Obesity is defined as BMI of 30 or more. (3) Adults diagnosed with diabetes are the percentage of adults who responded that a doctor had diagnosed diabetes, but does not include women only diagnosed with diabetes related to pregnancy. (4) Adults classified as physically inactive did not engage in 30 or more minutes of moderate physical activity five or more days per week or vigorous physical activity for 20 or more minutes three or more days per week.

For more information, go to CSG's Healthy States website <http://www.healthystates.csg.org/Publications/> and check out the publications on obesity, physical activity, workplace wellness and others on reducing health risks. See CSG StateNews May 2008 for an article on bringing healthy foods to low-income communities.