

Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity is a rapidly growing problem in the United States.

- ▶ In 2007, 13 percent of high school students were obese.¹ This rate has nearly tripled in the past two decades.²
- ▶ The prevalence of overweight has more than doubled among American children and tripled among adolescents in the past 20 years.³



The burden of obesity is not divided evenly among children.

- ▶ Minorities suffer from obesity at a higher rate than whites. From 2003 to 2006:
 - Nearly 28 percent of Mexican-American boys ages 6 to 11 had a body mass index at or above the 95th percentile. That compares to 19 percent for African-Americans and 16 percent for whites.⁴
 - Among girls ages 12 to 19, 28 percent of African-Americans had a BMI at or above the 95th percentile, compared to 20 percent for Mexican-Americans and 15 percent for whites.⁴
 - In a recent study of 5-year-old Native Americans, 47 percent of boys and 41 percent of girls were overweight; 24 percent of them were obese.⁵
 - Overall, children living in rural areas are about 25 percent more likely to be overweight or obese than children living in metropolitan areas.⁶

Obesity can lead to serious health problems for children.

- ▶ Thirty-two percent of children diagnosed with diabetes were classified as having type 2 diabetes, formerly known as adult onset diabetes. Obesity is one of the leading risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes. Previously rare in children, type 2 diabetes is becoming more common.⁷
- ▶ Of those children diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, nearly 75 percent of them also were obese. They also were more likely to have asthma, high blood pressure and high cholesterol than children diagnosed with type 1 diabetes.⁷

States are trying a variety of programs to curb the growth of childhood obesity.

- ▶ Forty-two states plus the District of Columbia have strategic statewide plans to combat obesity.
- ▶ Twenty-five states have set nutritional standards for competitive foods, which are foods sold outside the school lunch program.
- ▶ Nineteen states have standards that mandate the collection of BMI or other health information.

¹ "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance —United States, 2007." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, June 6, 2008. Accessed from http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/pdf/yrbs07_mmwr.pdf October 21, 2008.

² The Surgeon General's Call To Action To Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity. "Overweight in Children and Adolescents." Accessed from <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/factsheet06.pdf> October 21, 2008.

³ Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Curtin LR, McDowell MA, Tabak CJ, Flegal KM. "Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity in the United States, 1999-2004." *JAMA* 2006;295:1549-1555.

⁴ Ogden, Cynthia L., et al. "High Body Mass Index for Age Among U.S. Children and Adolescents, 2003-2006." *JAMA*. 2008;299(20):2401-2405.

⁵ Zephier E, Himes JH, Story M, Zhou X (2006). "Increasing prevalences of overweight and obesity in Northern Plains American Indian children," *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*, Jan;160(1):34-9.

⁶ Lutfiyya, Lipsky, Wisdom-Behounek and Inpanbutr-Martinkus. "Is rural residency a risk factor for overweight and obesity for U.S. Children?" *Obesity*. Sep 2007. Volume 15. Pages 2348-2356.

⁷ Lipton, Rebecca B., et al. "Obesity at the Onset of Diabetes in an Ethnically Diverse Population of Children: What Does It Mean for Epidemiologists and Clinicians?" *Pediatrics* 2005;115:e553-560.

STATE CHILDHOOD OBESITY BY RACE AND POVERTY RATE, 2003

State	Percentage of Children Ages 10–17 Who Are Overweight or Obese	Percentage of Whites Overweight or Obese	Percentage of African-Americans Overweight or Obese	Percentage of Hispanics Overweight or Obese	Percentage of Overweight/Obese <100 Federal Poverty Rate
National	30.6	26.6	41.2	37.7	39.8
Alabama	34.6	30.3	41.9	N/A	37.4
Alaska	30.7	28.9	N/A	N/A	39.8
Arizona	29.7	23.4	N/A	38.4	39.4
Arkansas	32.9	29.9	40.9	N/A	35.5
California	30.0	26.1	N/A	36.3	31.0
Colorado	21.9	18.3	N/A	32.4	N/A
Connecticut	27.3	23.2	44.9	32.4	N/A
Delaware	35.5	28.8	48.9	56.6	54.3
District of Columbia	39.5	12.7	43.6	45.4	51.9
Florida	32.5	25.4	45.3	38.2	43.1
Georgia	31.7	26.2	41.6	N/A	41.1
Hawaii	26.9	23.6	N/A	39.8	35.7
Idaho	25.6	23.0	N/A	49.2	N/A
Illinois	31.2	27.8	39.1	40.1	48.4
Indiana	32.9	32.8	N/A	N/A	49.3
Iowa	25.5	24.1	N/A	N/A	39.6
Kansas	30.0	27.4	N/A	36.9	45.1
Kentucky	38.2	37.5	43.5	N/A	50.5
Louisiana	35.6	31.9	40.5	N/A	36.6
Maine	30.0	29.5	N/A	N/A	32.8
Maryland	29.9	23.5	41.6	N/A	43.0
Massachusetts	28.9	23.8	N/A	45.2	44.8
Michigan	28.8	26.9	35.6	N/A	40.8
Minnesota	23.9	21.8	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mississippi	36.7	29.4	45.4	N/A	43.2
Missouri	31.0	28.3	48.8	N/A	48.2
Montana	27.3	25.5	N/A	N/A	37.7
Nebraska	26.3	24.9	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nevada	26.6	23.2	N/A	34.6	N/A
New Hampshire	27.3	27.1	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	31.5	25.2	54.0	36.9	51.4
New Mexico	28.9	19.2	N/A	34.6	46.1
New York	30.9	26.8	39.5	37.0	35.6
North Carolina	33.9	26.9	47.2	N/A	45.0
North Dakota	26.9	24.8	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	30.4	28.5	39.3	N/A	43.0
Oklahoma	28.2	24.5	N/A	N/A	36.3
Oregon	26.5	25.0	N/A	41.3	41.6
Pennsylvania	29.3	27.0	43.2	N/A	26.7
Rhode Island	27.0	24.4	N/A	39.1	32.7
South Carolina	36.1	28.6	48.1	N/A	46.3
South Dakota	25.8	21.3	N/A	N/A	37.3
Tennessee	35.3	34.8	39.6	N/A	44.1
Texas	32.4	26.4	36.8	41.5	43.5
Utah	20.9	18.3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vermont	25.6	25.5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Virginia	30.5	24.6	41.0	48.2	45.8
Washington	25.0	23.5	N/A	34.1	N/A
West Virginia	36.4	35.6	N/A	N/A	47.0
Wisconsin	29.4	26.9	N/A	N/A	54.1
Wyoming	22.9	22.2	N/A	N/A	N/A

N/A—Not Available. Estimates with a relative standard error greater than 30 percent or based on an unweighted sample of fewer than 25 children are considered unreliable and are not reported.

Source: Childhood Obesity Action Network. Accessed from <http://childhealthdata.org/content/ObesityReportCards.aspx> October 29, 2008.