

Facts About Obesity in the United States

Fact: Obesity rates are soaring in the U.S.

- Between 1980 and 2000, obesity rates doubled among adults. About 60 million adults, or 30% of the adult population, are now obese.
- Similarly since 1980, overweight rates have doubled among children and tripled among adolescents – increasing the number of years they are exposed to the health risks of obesity.

Fact: Obesity is already having an adverse impact on young people

- Type 2 diabetes – once believed to affect only adults – is now being diagnosed among young people.
- In some communities almost half of the pediatric diabetes cases are type 2, when in the past the total was close to zero. Although childhood-onset Type 2 diabetes is still a rare condition, overweight children with this disease are at risk of suffering the serious complications of diabetes as adults, such as kidney disease, blindness, and amputations.
- Sixty-one percent of overweight 5- to 10-year-olds already have at least one risk factor for heart disease, and 26% have two or more risk factors.

Fact: Most people still do not practice healthy behaviors that can prevent obesity

The primary behaviors causing the obesity epidemic are well known and preventable: physical inactivity and unhealthy diet. Despite this knowledge:

- Only about 25% of U.S. adults eat the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Less than 25% of adolescents eat the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
- More than 50% of American adults do not get the recommended amount of physical activity to provide health benefits.
- More than a third of young people in grades 9–12 do not regularly engage in vigorous physical activity.

Fact: Obesity-related costs place a huge burden on the U.S. economy

Direct health costs attributable to obesity have been estimated at \$52 billion in 1995 and \$75 billion in 2003.

Among children and adolescents, annual hospital costs related to overweight and obesity more than tripled over the past two decades – rising to \$127 million during 1997–1999 (in 2001 constant U.S. dollars), up from \$35 million during 1979–1981.

Among adults in 1996, one study found that \$31 billion of the treatment costs (in year 2000 dollars) for cardiovascular disease – 17% of direct medical costs – were related to overweight and obesity.