



Overweight and Obesity Fact Sheet

Modest weight loss of five to fifteen percent of total body weight in a person who is overweight or obese reduces the risk factors for many diseases, particularly heart disease and diabetes.¹

- Currently, approximately 65 percent, or approximately 130 million, of U.S. adults are overweight or obese.² Approximately 60 million U.S. adults are obese and nine million U.S. adults are severely obese.³
- Even modest changes in body weight can yield large health benefits. Studies show that reducing body weight by just five percent to fifteen percent in a person who is overweight or obese can substantially reduce the risk of obesity-related health complications.^{1, 13, 15}
- Although people of all ages, races and ethnicity can become overweight or obese, there are some people who are at greater risk than others. Overweight and obesity occur at higher rates in African Americans and Hispanic Americans, compared with white Americans. Minority women and individuals of low socioeconomic status are particularly affected by overweight and obesity. Asian Americans have a low prevalence of obesity.⁴
- The prevalence of obesity quadrupled over 25 years among U.S. children. Excess weight in childhood has been found to predict overweight in adults.⁷
- It is estimated that 112,000 more deaths were associated with obesity relative to normal weight in the year 2000.⁵ If the overweight/obesity trend is not reversed, the gains in life expectancy and quality of life resulting from medical advances will erode, and increasing health costs will burden the U.S. healthcare system.⁶
- By 2014, total health spending is projected to constitute 18.7 percent of the national gross domestic product (GDP), up from 15.3 percent in 2003.⁷ Costs related to overweight and obesity in the U.S. reached \$117 billion in 1995.⁸
- Factors that can contribute to overweight and obesity include an abundance of high-calorie foods, low levels of physical activity, genetics, metabolism, behavior, environment, culture and socioeconomic status. Behavior and environment play a large role in causing people to become overweight and obese.⁹
- Overweight and obesity can be associated with an increased risk of:^{10, 11, 12}
 - Hypertension
 - Dyslipidemia
 - Type 2 diabetes
 - Coronary heart disease
 - Stroke
 - Gallbladder disease
 - Osteoarthritis
 - Cancer (endometrial, breast, prostate and colon)
 - Complications of pregnancy
 - Sleep apnea and respiratory problems
 - Psychological disorders
 - Hirsutism (presence of excess body and facial hair)
 - Menstrual irregularities
 - Stress incontinence

- Physical activity, along with a healthy diet, plays an important role in the prevention of overweight and obesity. To maintain a constant weight, individuals need to expend the same amount of calories as they consume.¹³
- Overweight is defined as having a Body Mass Index (BMI) ranging from 25.0 to 29.9, and obesity is diagnosed in individuals with a BMI greater than or equal to 30.¹⁴ Body Mass Index (BMI) can be used to screen for both overweight and obesity in adults and is a non-gender specific calculation based on height and weight.¹⁵
- More proven safe and effective treatments for weight control are needed. Weight loss and weight maintenance can be achieved through:^{16,17}
 - Pharmacotherapy
 - Reduced-calorie and/or low-fat diets
 - Increased physical activity (30 minutes of physical activity is recommended to reduce the risk of chronic disease, 60 minutes of physical activity is recommended to prevent unhealthy weight gain and 90 minutes of physical activity is recommended to sustain weight loss for previously overweight/obese people.)
 - Bariatric surgery

References

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- ² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services "Statistics Related to Overweight and Obesity." <http://win.niddk.nih.gov/statistics#preval> Accessed 6.17.05
- ³ American Obesity Association. "Obesity in the U.S." http://www.obesity.org/subs/fastfacts/obesity_US.shtml Accessed 5.04.05
- ⁴ American Obesity Association. "Obesity in Minority Populations." http://www.obesity.org/subs/fastfacts/Obesity_Minority_Pop.shtml. Accessed 8.01.05.
- ⁵ Katherine M. Flegal; Barry I. Graubard; David F. Williamson; Mitchell H. Gail Excess Deaths Associated With Underweight, Overweight, and Obesity JAMA, April 20, 2005; 293: 1861 - 1867. Accessed from the "CDC Efforts to Reduce or Prevent Obesity" Fact Sheet.
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- ⁷ Heffler S, Smith S, Keehan S, Borger C, Clemens MK, Truffler C. "U.S. Health Spending Projections for 2004-2014" by the National Health Statistics Group 2005.
- ⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services "Statistics Related to Overweight and Obesity." <http://win.niddk.nih.gov/statistics#preval> Accessed 6.17.05
- ⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Overweight and Obesity: Contributing Factors." http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/contributing_factors.htm. Accessed 8.01.05
- ¹⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Overweight and Obesity." <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/> Accessed 5.04.05
- ¹¹ National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute "Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults." http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/ob_gdlns.htm Accessed 8.01.05.
- ¹² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Statistics Related to Overweight and Obesity." <http://win.niddk.nih.gov/statistics/#preval> Accessed 6.17.05
- ¹³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Overweight and Obesity: Frequently Asked Questions." <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/faq.htm>. Accessed 6.17.05
- ¹⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Body Mass Index." <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/bmi-adult.htm>. Accessed 5.04.05
- ¹⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Statistics Related to Overweight and Obesity." <http://win.niddk.nih.gov/statistics/#preval> Accessed 5.04.05.

¹⁶ National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute “Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults.” http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/ob_gdlns.htm Accessed 5.04.05.

¹⁷ United States Department of Agriculture. “Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005.” <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/html/chapter4.htm> “Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005.”