

More States Reach 30 Percent Obesity Rate

Obesity is common, serious and costly. Promote policies and programs at school, at work and in the community that make the healthy choice the easy choice.



The obesity epidemic affects every state, according to a new CDC report. No state met the country's *Healthy People 2010* goal to lower obesity to 15 percent. The report also makes recommendations on how to reverse the epidemic.

The report, titled "State-Specific Obesity Prevalence Among Adults – United States, 2009," points out that people who are obese incurred \$1,429 per person extra in medical costs compared to people of normal weight, and that the nation's total medical costs of obesity were \$147 billion in 2008.

New data shows that nine states had an obesity rate of 30 percent or higher in 2009. In comparison, no state had an obesity rate of 30 percent or more in 2000, and only three states reached the 30 percent mark in 2007.

Obesity affects some communities and regions more than others. The highest rates are found among:

- Black populations, especially black women
- Hispanics
- Non-high school graduates
- Midwesterners
- Residents of the South

Serious, Complex Problem

Obesity is a contributing cause of many other health problems, including:

- High Blood Pressure
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Joint Disease, and
- Some types of cancer.

These are some of the leading causes of death in the U.S. Obesity can also cause sleep apnea and breathing problems as well as limit mobility. In addition, obesity can also causes problems during pregnancy or make it more difficult for a woman to become pregnant.



Obesity is a complex problem that requires both personal and community action. People in all communities should be able to make healthy choices. To reverse this epidemic, we need to change our communities into places that strongly support healthy eating and active living.

Given the magnitude of this problem, past efforts and investments have not been sufficient.

CDC Report Outlines Multiple Solutions

The report recommends efforts for individuals as well as communities and government.

All people can:

- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Eat fewer foods high in fat and sugar.
- Drink more water instead of sugary drinks.
- Become more physically active.
- Watch less television.
- Support breastfeeding.
- Support policies and programs at school, at work, and in the community that make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Communities should:

- Create and maintain safe neighborhoods to encourage physical activity and improve access to parks and playgrounds.
- Sponsor quality physical education in schools and childcare facilities.
- Encourage breastfeeding through peer-to-peer support.
- Sponsor programs that bring local fruits and vegetables to schools, businesses, and communities.



State and local health departments can:

- Promote supermarkets and farmers' markets Establish incentives for such businesses in low-income areas and to offer healthy foods.
- Support programs that bring local fruits and vegetables to schools, businesses, and communities.
- Support hospital programs that encourage breastfeeding.
- Adopt policies that promote exercise and bicycling.

U.S. Government is responding to the Obesity Epidemic:

- CDC provided \$139 million to 50 states and \$373 million to 30 communities or tribes to fund programs that improve nutrition and increase physical activity to reverse the obesity epidemic.
- To eliminate food deserts in 7 years, the National Healthy Food Financing Initiative brings healthy foods to communities that do not currently have access to supermarkets and grocery stores.

