



Healthy Weight, Healthy Lifestyles Primary Fact Sheet for the Institute on the Costs and Health Effects of Obesity

General Statistics

- **Nearly two out of three (64.5%) U.S. adults are overweight or obese.** *(National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, 1999.)*
- **The percentage of U.S. adults classified as obese doubled between 1980 and 2000, from 15% to 31%.** *(National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1999.)*
- **Obesity and overweight conditions contribute as much as \$93 billion to the nation's yearly medical bill, according to a study conducted by economists from RTI International and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** *(Project HOPE – The People-to-People Health Foundation, Inc., 2003.)*
- **Distribution of adults aged 20 and over by BMI category (18.5-24.9=normal; 25.0-29.9=overweight; 30.0 and above=obese):**

BMI 19-24: 30%	BMI 30-39: 31%
BMI 25-29: 34%	BMI > 40: 4.7%

(National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2001.)
- **About 16% of U.S. children, ages 16-19, are overweight, up from 11% in the previous study (1988-94).** *(Prevalence of Overweight Among Children and Adolescents, national Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1999-2002.)*



- **The use of bariatric surgery is growing sharply, from 16,000 procedures in 1992, to 63,000 in 2002, to 100,000 in 2003, to 140,000 in 2004, and an estimated 171,000 in 2005 (at an average cost of \$25,000 per procedure). About 23 million Americans meet National Institutes of Health guidelines for bariatric surgery.** *(American Society for Bariatric Surgery, 2006.)*
- **An estimated 5%-10% of America's 127,000-255,000 obese adolescents have a BMI that is greater than 40. This means that severe obesity is more common than the combined incidence of adolescent cystic fibrosis, juvenile diabetes, HIV and cancer.** *(Richard Strauss, M.D., Johnson & Johnson pharmaceutical Research & Development Corporation.)*
- **Each year, more American children are killed by obesity than gun violence.** *(Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity, 2001.)*
- **Obesity is a greater trigger for health problems and increased health spending than smoking or drinking. Individuals who are obese have 30% to 50% more chronic medical problems than those who smoke or drink heavily.** *(Roland Sturm, UCLA/RAND Managed Care Center for Psychiatric Disorders, The Effects of Obesity, Smoking and Drinking on Medical Problems and Costs, Health Affairs, March/April 2002.)*
- **The effects of obesity are similar to 20 years of aging.** *(Roland Sturm, UCLA/RAND Managed Care Center for Psychiatric Disorders, The Effects of Obesity, Smoking and Drinking on Medical Problems and Costs, Health Affairs, March/April 2002.)*



- **Nearly 60% of U.S. adults reported getting no leisure-time physical activity in 2002.** (*Prevalence of no Leisure-time Physical Activity – 35 States and the District of Columbia, 1988-2002, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*)

Health Risks

- **The estimate for excess deaths due to obesity ranges from 112,000 per year to 365,000 per year.** (*Flegal et al., JAMA, 2005; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004.*)
- **Overweight and obese individuals are at increased risk for type 2 diabetes; heart disease; hypertension; osteoarthritis; sleep apnea; gallbladder disease; respiratory problems; stroke; endometrial, breast, prostate and colon cancers; poor female reproductive health; and depression, among other conditions.** (*The Practical Guide: Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults, NHLBI, 2000.*)
- **For every two-pound increase in weight, the risk of developing arthritis is increased by 9%-13%.** (*Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity, 2001.*)
- **Children who develop type 2 diabetes at a young age lose 20-28 “life years,” and 28-35 “quality-adjusted life years.”** (*David S. Ludwig, M.D., PhD, Cara B. Ebbeling, PhD, Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in Children: Primary Care and Public Health Considerations, JAMA, September 2001.*)



Employer Costs

- **The total cost of obesity to U.S. companies is estimated at \$13 billion per year.** Health insurance costs related to obesity comprise the largest percentage of the total (\$8 billion), followed by paid sick leave (\$2.4 billion), life insurance (\$1.8 billion), and disability insurance (\$1 billion). *(Prevention Makes Common Cents: Estimated Economic Costs of Obesity to U.S. Business, DHHS, 2003.)*
- **Inactivity costs between \$670-\$1,125 per person, per year.** *(Economic Costs of Obesity and Inactivity, Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise, 1999.)*
- **Obesity accounts for approximately 9.1% of total annual medical care expenditures.** *(Eric A. Finkelstein, Ian C. Fiebelkorn, Guijing Wang, National Medical Spending Attributable to Overweight and Obesity: How Much and Who's Paying? Health Affairs, Web Exclusive, May 2003.)*
- **Some 8% of private employer medical claims are due to overweight and obesity.** *(Eric A. Finkelstein, Ian C. Fiebelkorn, Guijing Wang, National Medical Spending Attributable to Overweight and Obesity: How Much and Who's Paying? Health Affairs, Web Exclusive, May 2003.)*
- **Obesity-related disabilities cost employers an average of \$8,720 per claimant per year for wage indemnity.** *(UnumProvident, 2004.)*
- **Obese individuals have higher health care utilization rates:**
 - 36 % higher inpatient and outpatient spending
 - 77% higher medication spending
 - 45% more inpatient days



- 48% more expenditures over \$5,000
- 11% higher annual health care costs

(Health Risks and Behavior: The Impact on Medical Costs, Control Data Corporation, 1987.)

- **Obesity is associated with 39 million lost work days; 239 million restricted-activity days; 90 million bed days; and 63 million physician visits.** *(Current*

Estimates of the Economic Cost of Obesity in the United States, Obesity Research, 1998.)

- **Obesity drove 27% of medical cost increases between 1987 and 2001.** *(Kenneth*

E. Thorpe, Curtis S. Florence, David H. Howard, Peter Joski, The Impact of Obesity on Rising Medical Spending, Health Affairs, Web Exclusive, October 20, 2004.)