



# FAST FACTS



## Trends in Obesity Prevalence

**OBESITY** is a complex chronic disease in which abnormal or excessive accumulation of body fat impairs health. Adult obesity rates have more than doubled since the 1980s — in the U.S. today, obesity affects over 1 in 3 adults and almost 1 in 5 youth.<sup>1</sup> Obesity and its related complications are major drivers of rising healthcare costs, diminished health-related quality of life, and a decline in U.S. life expectancy. This fact sheet is part of a series designed to provide basic information about the science of obesity and current strategies to address it.

### Obesity Prevalence and Disparities

**Obesity, defined as a BMI over 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, has increased significantly over the past few decades.** The U.S. adult obesity rate has risen from 22.9% in the early 90s to 39.6% in 2016.<sup>2</sup>

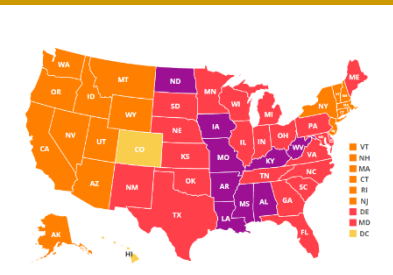
- In 1990, not a single state had an obesity rate of **over** 20%. In 2018, not a single state had an obesity rate **below** 20%.<sup>3</sup>
  - Mississippi has consistently had the highest obesity rate with 15% in 1990 and 39.5% in 2018
  - Colorado has consistently had the lowest obesity rate with 6.9% in 1990 and 23% in 2018
- Disparities exist, not only geographically, but also by sex and race. The groups with the current highest obesity rates are:<sup>2</sup>
  - Black women, with an obesity rate of 54.8%
  - Hispanic women, with an obesity rate of 50.6%
  - Hispanic men, with an obesity rate of 43.1%
- Obesity rate disparities are also found when looking at obesity rates by age and sex:

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

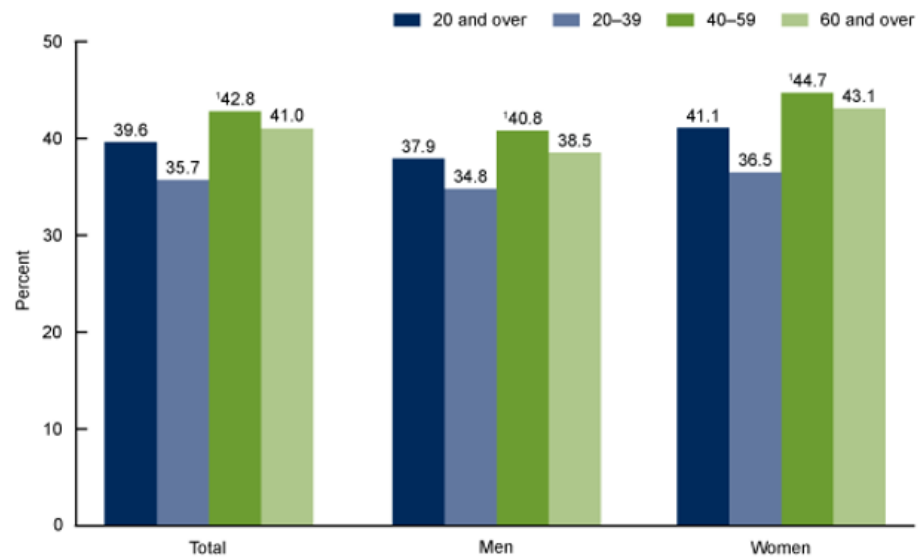
- Obesity rates have increased steadily in the U.S. throughout the last 50 years.
- Obesity rates differ by geographic location, age, sex, and race.
- Obesity rates have been steadily increasing throughout the world and will likely continue to do so unless far-reaching and effective interventions are implemented.

### LEARN MORE

*Epidemiology of Obesity*  
 Robert Wood Johnson  
 Foundation:  
*Obesity Rate Trend Graphics*

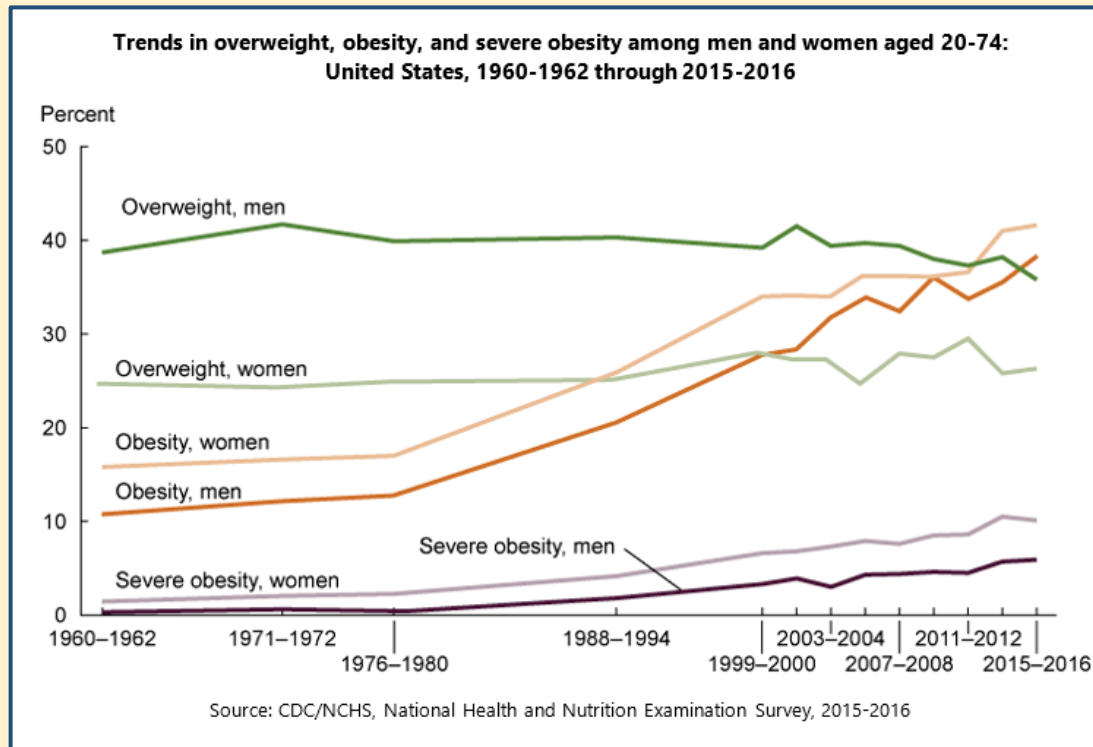


Prevalence of obesity among adults aged 20 and over, by sex and age: United States, 2015–2016



Source: CDC/NCHS, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2015-2016

## Trends in Obesity Prevalence



### Rates of obesity are steadily rising.

Rates of overweight have plateaued or decreased since the 1960s. Rates of obesity have continued to rise. The continuing rise in the rates of severe obesity pose the greatest concern.

## Future Obesity Trends

**Unless effective strategies to prevent and treat obesity are implemented, obesity rates will continue to climb.**

Projections suggest that the U.S. adult obesity rate in 2030 will be around 1 in 2, with severe obesity rates reaching nearly 1 in 4.<sup>4</sup>

- In Europe, obesity rates have been predicted to grow in 44 countries, despite WHO goals to halt the increase of obesity rates by 2025.<sup>5</sup>
- Globally, obesity rates continue to rise while undernutrition remains a problem in many countries. One study predicted that:<sup>6</sup>
  - If global obesity trends continue there is almost no chance of reaching the WHO goal by 2025
  - By 2025, global obesity prevalence will reach 18% in men and over 21% in women
  - By 2025, global severe obesity rates will be over 6% in men and 9% in women

## REFERENCES

- [1] Hales CM, Carroll MD, Fryar CD, Ogden CL. Prevalence of obesity among adults and youth: United States, 2015–2016. NCHS Data Brief, No 288.
- [2] RWJF. National Obesity Monitor. The State of Childhood Obesity. <https://stateofchildhoodobesity.org/monitor/>. Accessed November 19, 2019.
- [3] RWJF. Obesity Rates: Adults. The State of Childhood Obesity. <https://stateofchildhoodobesity.org/adult-obesity/>. Accessed December 17, 2019.
- [4] Ward ZJ, Bleich SN, Cradock AL, et al. Projected U.S. state-level prevalence of adult obesity and severe obesity. *N Engl J Med*. 2019;381(25):2440-2450.
- [5] Pineda E, Sanchez-Romero LM, Brown M, et al. Forecasting Future Trends in Obesity across Europe: The Value of Improving Surveillance. *Obes Facts*. 2018;11(5):360–371.
- [6] Trends in adult body-mass index in 200 countries from 1975 to 2014: A pooled analysis of 1698 population-based measurement studies with 19.2 million participants. *The Lancet*. 2016;387(10026):1377-1396