

Obesity in North Carolina

Reference Guide - Obesity and Related Data

Obesity in NC

Nearly 2 in every 3 adults in NC is overweight or obese.¹ More than 1 in every 3 children in NC is overweight or obese.²

Overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight and obese adults. This increases to 80% if at least one parent is overweight or obese.³

Physical Activity and Nutrition – Our Unhealthy Habits

Sedentary lifestyles and poor eating habits are widely recognized contributors to the overweight epidemic in NC. Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating combined are the second leading preventable cause of death in NC, and both increase the risk of heart disease, certain types of cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, and obesity.⁴

- More than 24% of NC adults reported no physical activity within the previous month and nearly 24% of adults had not engaged in leisure-time physical activity within the previous week.⁵
- 56% of NC adults do not get the recommended amount of physical activity, compared with 51.2% nationally.⁶ Nearly half of NC students do not get the recommended amount of physical activity.⁷
- Nearly 80% of NC adults and 85% of NC high school students eat less than 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day, the minimum recommended for good health.^{8,9}
- One-third of NC children typically consume one serving or less of vegetables per day,¹⁰ and one in every three NC children eats fast food two or more times per week.¹¹
- 49.9% of NC children watch more than two hours of television on a typical day.¹²

Obesity, Physical Activity, and Academic Achievement

- Overweight children were absent significantly more than normal-weight children.¹³ Studies have demonstrated a negative association between number of absences and academic performance.^{14,15}
- Studies suggest that overweight or obese children (grades K through Grade 12) have poorer academic outcomes.¹⁶

Physical Education and Academic Achievement

- Students with higher grades are less likely to engage in physical **inactivity** than their classmates with lower grades.¹⁷
- “Despite devoting twice as many minutes per week to physical education, the health-related physical education program did not interfere with academic achievement.”¹⁸
- Providing quality physical education has been noted to decrease disruptive behavior in schools and improve students’ grades, concentration, test scores, and self-esteem.^{19,20,21,22}

Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases

Overweight and obesity are significantly associated with diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, asthma, arthritis, and poor health status. Heart disease, cancer, stroke, and chronic lung disease account for 58% of all deaths in the state.²³

- Overweight individuals are nearly 40% more likely to develop heart disease and 50% more likely to develop diabetes than healthy weight individuals. The risk is even greater for obese individuals.
- Diabetes has more than doubled in NC over the past decade. Nearly 1 in 10 NC adults have been diagnosed with diabetes, which is higher than the general US population.²⁴
- More than 1.2 million people in NC have pre-diabetes or diabetes, and many are unaware of their condition. 87% of adults with diabetes in NC are overweight or obese.

Obesity and Chronic Diseases in Children and Youth – Kids with adult diseases

- An estimated 15-45% of all new diabetes case in NC children are Type II – a disease previously found only in adults.²⁵ NC public schools reported that 4,437 students had diabetes in 2005-2006; 3,419 monitored blood glucose at school; 1,918 received insulin injections at school; and 1,414 had insulin pumps.²⁶
- In addition, nearly half of NC students do not get the recommended amount of physical activity,²⁷ which means they are 600 times more likely to develop heart disease as adults.²⁸

Cost to NC Employers

Overweight and obese workers cost their employers more.

- Increasing BMI is associated with greater costs to employee health plans; obese workers have up to 21% higher health care costs compared with those of healthy weight.^{29 30 31}
- An overweight or obese adult will accrue \$250,000 in lost productivity over the course of his or her career.³² A Duke University study found that the number of lost workdays for obese adults was almost 13 times higher, compared with those of healthy weight.³³

Obesity-related Medical Costs

Individuals who are obese have annual medical costs 37.4% higher than their healthy weight counterparts, representing an additional \$732 per obese person, per year.³⁴

	Costs in 2006 ³⁵	Projected Costs for 2011	Projected Costs for 2015
Adults 18 +: Direct Medical & Indirect Costs	\$57.37 billion	\$75.64 billion	\$94.31 billion
Youth Age 10-17: Direct Medical Costs related to overweight and obesity*	\$105.13 million	\$164.59 million	\$204.96 million

* NC costs are calculated according to the prevalence of the following risk factors: poor nutrition, physical inactivity, overweight and obese, hypertension, high cholesterol, tobacco use, depression and type II diabetes.

Medicaid Expenditures – We all pay the price for obesity

- Nationally, nearly one half of overweight- and obesity-attributable medical spending becomes the responsibility of the public sector (Medicaid and Medicare).³⁶
- In 2003, an estimated 11.5% (\$662 million) of NC Medicaid expenditures for adults were attributed to obesity.³⁷ The direct and indirect Medicaid costs related to obesity in NC youth is estimated at nearly \$16 million per year (based on 2003 dollars).³⁸

¹ North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, NC State Center for Health Statistics, NC Department of Health and Human Services. (2007).

² 35.5% of children and youth age 6-17 are overweight (18.6%) or obese (16.9%). Data Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program (CHAMP), 2007. Available at:

www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/champ/index.html

³ Telama, R., Yang, X., Laakso, L., and Viikari, J. (1997). Physical activity in childhood and adolescence as predictor of physical activity in young adulthood. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 13, 317-323.

⁴ North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, 2002; NC Medical Journal, July/August 2002, Vol.63, #4, Makdad, 2004 & NC Mortality 2006.

⁵ North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), State Center for Health Statistics. Available at:

<http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/brfss/results.html>.

Accessed on 4/3/2007

⁶ North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, NC State Center for Health Statistics, NC Department of Health and Human Services, (2007).

⁷ Reflects high school (56%) and middle school students (45%) who were not physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day on five or more of the past seven days. Data Source: North Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. (2007)

⁸ 21.6% of North Carolina adults consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Data Source: North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), State Center for Health Statistics. (2007). Available at:

<http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/brfss/results.html>.

Accessed on 4/3/2007

⁹ State Center for Health Statistics. Department of Health and Human Resources, Division of Public Health. Services. Available at:

<http://www.nchealthyschools.org/data/YRBSS/> Accessed on 6/27/2007

¹⁰ North Carolina Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program (CHAMP), State Center for Health Statistics. Available at:

<http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/champ/results.html>. Accessed on 11/13/2007

¹¹ North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, State Center for Health Statistics. Health Profile of North Carolinians: 2007 Update-May 2007. Available at: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/pdf/HealthProfile2007.pdf>

¹² North Carolina Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program (CHAMP), State Center for Health Statistics. (2007). Available at:

<http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/champ/results.html>. Accessed on 11/13/2007

¹³ Geier, A.B., Foster, G.D., Womble, L.G., et al. (2007). The Relationship Between Relative Weight and School Attendance Among Elementary Schoolchildren. *Obesity*. 15, 2157–2161. Accessed on March 13, 2009 at

<http://www.nature.com/oby/journal/v15/n8/full/oby2007256a.html#bib13>

¹⁴ Monk, D., Ibrahim, M. (1984) Patterns of absence and pupil achievement. *Am Educ Res J*. 21: 295–310.

¹⁵ Dunn, M. C., Kadane, J. B., Garrow, J. R. (2003) Comparing harm done by mobility and class absence: missing students and missing data. *J Educ Behav Statist*. 28: 269–288.

¹⁶ Taras, H., Potts-Datema, W. (2005) Obesity and student performance at school. *J School Health*. 75: 291–295.

¹⁷ Data from the 2003 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS),

http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health_risk_behaviors.pdf

¹⁸ Sallis, J.F., McKenzie, T.L., Kolody, B., Lewis, M., Marshall, S., and Rosengard, P. (1999). Effects of health-related physical education on academic achievement: Project SPARK. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 70, 127-136. Abstracted in "The Research File" newsletter of the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. December 1999.

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²⁰ Dwyer, T, et al. Relation of academic performance to physical activity and fitness in children. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 2001,13:225-237,1979,3:196-202.

²¹ Sallis JF, et al. Effects of health-related physical education on academic achievement. Project SPARK, *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 1999, 70(2), 127-134.

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- ²² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines for School and Community Programs: Promoting Lifelong Physical Activity. March 1977.
- ²³ North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, NC State Center for Health Statistics, NC Department of Health and Human Services, (2007).
- ²⁴ NC 9.1% versus 8.1% nationally. Data Source: North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, NC State Center for Health Statistics, NC Department of Health and Human Services, (2007).
- ²⁵ Tipping the Scales: How obesity and unhealthy lifestyles have become a weighty problem for the North Carolina economy. Be Active North Carolina, Inc. June 2008. (Chenoweth & Associates)
- ²⁶ NC Annual School Health Nursing Survey: Summary Report of School Nursing Services 2005-06 NC Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Human Services. Public Schools of North Carolina, Department of Public Instruction. http://wch.dhhs.state.nc.us/2005_2006_EOY%20Report%2010-18-06.pdf Accessed February 25, 2009.
- ²⁷ Reflects high school (56%) and middle school students (45%) who were not physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day on five or more of the past seven days. Data Source: North Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. (2007)
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