



**FACT SHEET**

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**OBESITY IN AMERICA**

**PREVALENCE**

- Obesity is a life-threatening disease affecting over 33% of adults in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>
  - Prevalence in men is 32.2%
  - Prevalence in women is 35.5%<sup>1</sup>
- 68% of adults are either overweight or obese; more than 5% are considered morbidly obese<sup>2</sup>
- The World Health Organization predicts that by 2015, 700 million of world's population will be obese as defined by BMI > 30<sup>5</sup>
- In the U.S., only Colorado and Washington D.C. had a prevalence of obesity less than 20%. Thirty-four states had a prevalence equal to or greater than 25% and nine of these (Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and West Virginia) had a prevalence of obesity equal to or greater than 30%<sup>6</sup>
- Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years<sup>7</sup>; about 32% of children aged 10-17 in the U.S. are overweight and 16% are obese<sup>8</sup>

**FOCUS ON OBESITY**

- Direct obesity-related health spending costs the U.S. healthcare system an estimated \$147 billion annually, double what it was a decade ago and amounting to nearly 10% of medical spending<sup>3</sup>
- Between 2000 and 2005, obesity (BMI ≥30) increased by 25.6%, morbid obesity (BMI ≥ 40) increased by 50% and super obesity (BMI ≥ 50) increased by 75%<sup>4</sup>
- Contributing factors to obesity include genetics, metabolism, culture, illness, environment and psychological issues

**THE COST**

- The total indirect economic cost of an overweight and obese population is \$270 billion per year in the U.S. due to:
  - Increased need for medical care (\$127 billion)
  - Loss of worker productivity due to higher rates of death (\$49 billion), disability of active workers (\$43 billion) and total disability (\$72 billion)<sup>9</sup>
  - Total cost for overweight individuals is \$72 billion and total cost for obesity is \$198 billion<sup>10</sup>
- Obese individuals spend 40% more on health care than individuals of normal weight<sup>11</sup>
- Diseases associated with obesity account for 27% of the increases in medical costs from 1987-2001;<sup>12</sup> medical expenses related to overweight and obesity account for nearly 10% of U.S. medical spending, an estimated \$147 billion per year<sup>13</sup>

**RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH OBESITY**

- Morbid obesity is associated with more than 30 illnesses and medical conditions including:
  - Type 2 diabetes
  - coronary heart disease
  - stroke
  - hypertension
  - cancer
  - osteoarthritis
  - cirrhosis of the liver
  - infertility
  - pregnancy complications
  - gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
  - chronic headaches
  - sleep apnea
- Obesity is associated with 112,000 excess deaths due to cardiovascular disease, over 15,000 excess deaths due to cancer and over 35,000 excess deaths due to non-cancer/non-cardiovascular disease causes per year in the U.S. population<sup>14</sup>; obese individuals have a 10-50% increased risk of death compared to individuals of a healthy weight<sup>15</sup>

## WEIGHT CLASSIFICATIONS FOR ADULTS

- **Body Mass Index (BMI)** is the most common measurement tool to assess body fat, calculated by dividing weight in kilograms by height in meters, squared:  
$$\frac{\text{Weight in kilograms}}{\text{Height in meters}^2}$$
- **Super obese:** A person with BMI of 50 or more
  - 50,000 adults are super obese in the U.S.
- **Morbidly obese:** A person with BMI of 40 or more, or a BMI of 35 or more with an obesity-related disease, such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease or sleep apnea
  - 15 million adults are morbidly obese in the U.S.
- **Obese:** A person with BMI of 30 – 39.9
  - 64 million adults are obese in the U.S.
- **Overweight:** A person with BMI of 25 – 29.9
  - 134 million adults are overweight or obese in the U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> KM Flegal. "Prevalence and Trends in Obesity Among US Adults, 1999-2008." *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2010. 303(3):235-241. <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/2009.2014>.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Prevalence of Overweight, Obesity, and Extreme Obesity Among Adults: United States, Trends 1976-1980 Through 2007-2008." Updated 4 June 2010. [Cited March 2011]. Available From: [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/obesity\\_adult\\_07\\_08/obesity\\_adult\\_07\\_08.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/obesity_adult_07_08/obesity_adult_07_08.htm)

<sup>3</sup> EA Finkelstein et al. "Annual Medical Spending Attributable To Obesity: Payer-And Service-Specific Estimates." *Health Affairs*. 2009. 29(5):w822-w831. <http://healthaff.hi.wire.org/cgi/content/abstract/28/5/w822>

<sup>4</sup> R Sturm. "Increases in Morbid Obesity In the USA: 2000-2005." *Public Health*. Published July 2007. 121(7): 492-6.

<sup>5</sup> EM Burns et al. "Introduction of Laparoscopic Bariatric Surgery in England: Observational Population Cohort Study." *British Medical Journal*. 2010. 341: 1- 8.

<sup>6</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. U.S. Obesity Trends, 1985-2009. Updated 3 March 2011. [Cited March 2011] Available From: <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/trends.html#state>

<sup>7</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. "Childhood Obesity." February 2010. [Cited May 2010]. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/obesity/>

<sup>8</sup> GK Singh. "Changes in State-Specific Childhood Obesity and Overweight Prevalence in the United States From 2003 to 2007." *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*. May 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Society of Actuaries. "Obesity and its Relation to Mortality and Morbidity Costs." December 2010. [Cited February 2011]. Available from: <http://www.soa.org/files/pdf/research-2011-obesity-relation-mortality.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Society of Actuaries. New Society of Actuaries Study Estimates \$300 Billion Economic Cost Due to Overweight and Obesity, 2011. Updated 11 January 2011. [Cited March 2011] Available From: <http://www.soa.org/news-and-publications/newsroom/press-releases/2011-01-10-obesity.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "CDC Weight of the Nation Press Briefing." July 2009 [Cited May 2011] Available From: <http://www.cdc.gov/media/transcripts/2009/t090727.htm>

<sup>12</sup> National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Obesity – Halting the Epidemic by Making Health Easier At-A-Glance 2009. [Cited April 2010]. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/publications/AAG/pdf/obesity.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Obesity Halting the Epidemic by Making Health Easier: At A Glance 2010." Updated 4 March 2011. [Cited March 2011] Available From: <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/obesity.htm>

<sup>14</sup> KM Flegal et al. "Excess Deaths Associated with Underweight, Overweight, and Obesity." *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2005; 293: 1861-1867.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Office of the Surgeon General. "Overweight and Obesity: Health Consequences." Updated January 2007. [Cited May 2011] Available From: [http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact\\_consequences.htm](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_consequences.htm)

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