



National Conference of State Legislatures

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Childhood Obesity

- Approximately 13 million U.S. children and adolescents are obese, with a body mass index at or above the 95th percentile.
- Obesity is a major risk factor for many serious health conditions, including type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease, high blood pressure and certain cancers.
- During the past 40 years, obesity rates for children age 6 to 11 nearly tripled—from 5% to 14%—and more than tripled for adolescents age 12 to 19—from 5% to 17.1%.
- Obese adolescents have an 80% chance of becoming obese adults.
- An estimated 61% of obese young people already have at least one additional health risk factor such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol.
- Childhood obesity health expenses are estimated at \$14 billion annually.
- Good nutrition and physical activity can help prevent obesity, but opportunities for healthy choices may be limited. Wealthy communities have three times as many supermarkets as poor areas, increasing their access to fruits, vegetables, and a wider selection of healthy foods. Poorer areas also often have less access to places to be physically active.
- Almost 30% of U.S. children do not exercise three or more times a week.
- More than 75% of high school students do not eat the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Sources: Ogden, et al. *JAMA*, 295 (13): 1549-1555 and *JAMA*, 288 (14): 1728-1732.

CDC, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 54, no.8: 203. *Pediatrics* 103, no.6: 1175-1172.

CDC, *Preventing Obesity and Chronic Diseases through Good Nutrition and Physical Activity*.

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Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2007.