

# Overweight and Obesity Statistics



- [About Overweight and Obesity](#)
- [Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity](#)
- [Physical Activity Statistics](#)
- [Clinical Trials](#)
- [Resources](#)

## About Overweight and Obesity

This publication describes the prevalence of overweight and obesity in the United States.

- **Overweight** refers to an excess amount of body weight that may come from muscles, bone, fat, and water.<sup>1</sup>
- **Obesity** refers to an excess amount of body fat.<sup>1</sup>

## Fast Facts

Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2009–2010<sup>2, 3</sup>

- More than 2 in 3 adults are considered to be overweight or obese.
- More than 1 in 3 adults are considered to be obese.
- More than 1 in 20 adults are considered to have extreme obesity.
- About one-third of children and adolescents ages 6 to 19 are considered to be overweight or obese.
- More than 1 in 6 children and adolescents ages 6 to 19 are considered to be obese.

## Using Body Mass Index (BMI) to Estimate Overweight and Obesity

The BMI is the tool most commonly used to estimate overweight and obesity in children and adults.

<b>BMI of Adults Age 20 and Older</b>	
<b>BMI</b>	<b>Classification</b>
18.5 to 24.9	Normal weight
25 to 29.9	Overweight
30 +	Obesity
40 +	Extreme obesity

**For adults**, overweight and obesity ranges are measured by using weight and height to compute the person's BMI. The BMI is used because, for most people, it correlates with the amount of fat in their bodies. An online tool for gauging the BMIs of adults can be found at:

[http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult\\_BMI/english\\_bmi\\_calculator/bmi\\_calculator.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult_BMI/english_bmi_calculator/bmi_calculator.html) External Link Disclaimer

<b>BMI of Children and Adolescents Ages 2 - 19</b>	
<b>BMI</b>	<b>Classification</b>
At or above the 85th percentile	Overweight or obese
At or above the 95th percentile	Obese

**Children** grow at different rates at different times, so it is not always easy to tell if a child is overweight. BMI charts for children compare their height and weight to other children of their same sex and age. An online tool for gauging the BMIs of children and teens can be found at:

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/dnpabmi/Calculator.aspx> External Link Disclaimer

### **Causes of Overweight and Obesity**

Overweight and obesity result from an energy imbalance. The body needs a certain amount of energy (calories) from food to keep up basic life functions. Body weight tends to remain the same when the number of calories eaten equals the number of calories the body uses or “burns.” Over time, when people eat and drink more calories than they burn, the energy balance tips toward weight gain, overweight, and obesity.

Children need to balance their energy, too, but they are also growing and that should be considered as well. Energy balance in children happens when the amount of energy taken in from food or drink and the energy being used by the body support natural growth without promoting excess weight gain.

Many factors can lead to energy imbalance and weight gain. They include genes, eating habits, how and where people live, attitudes and emotions, life habits, and income.<sup>1</sup>

## Treatment of Overweight and Obesity

Overweight and obesity are risk factors for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and other health problems such as those listed below.

### Health Risks of Overweight and Obesity

- type 2 diabetes
- heart disease
- high blood pressure
- nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (excess fat and inflammation in the liver of people who drink little or no alcohol)
- osteoarthritis (a health problem causing pain, swelling, and stiffness in one or more joints)
- some types of cancer: breast, colon, endometrial (related to the uterine lining), and kidney
- stroke

There is no single cause of all overweight and obesity. There is no single approach that can help prevent or treat overweight and obesity. Treatment may include a mix of behavioral treatment, diet, exercise, and sometimes weight-loss drugs. In some cases of extreme obesity, weight-loss surgery may be an option.<sup>1</sup>

## Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity

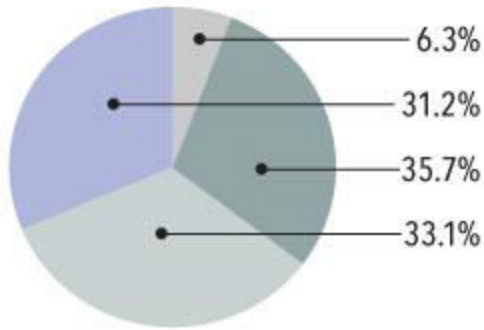
The data presented in this publication are from two surveys conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)<sup>2,3</sup> and the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS).<sup>4</sup>

### Adults Age 20 and Older

- More than two-thirds (68.8 percent) of adults are considered to be overweight or obese.
- More than one-third (35.7 percent) of adults are considered to be obese.
- More than 1 in 20 (6.3 percent) have extreme obesity.
- Almost 3 in 4 men (74 percent) are considered to be overweight or obese.
- The prevalence of obesity is similar for both men and women (about 36 percent).
- About 8 percent of women are considered to have extreme obesity.

## Overweight and Obesity among Adults Age 20 and Older, United States, 2009–2010

### Estimated Percentage by BMI

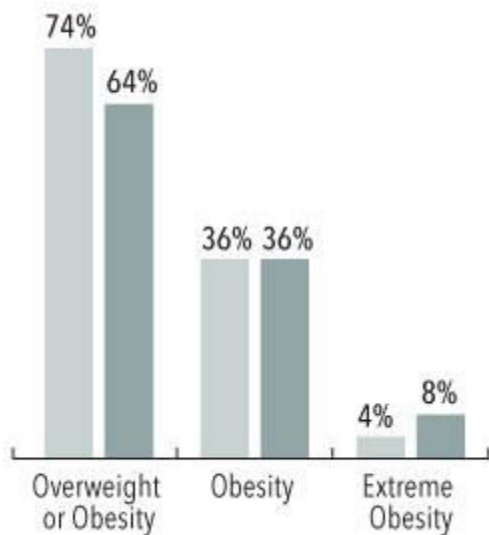


- Normal weight or underweight (BMI under 24.9)
- Overweight (BMI of 25 to 29.9)
- Obesity (BMI of 30+)
- Extreme obesity (BMI of 40+)

According to the pie graph, 31.2 percent of adults had BMIs under 24.9 and so were considered normal weight or underweight. Another 33.1 percent had BMIs from 25 to 29.9, and so they were considered overweight. The group with BMIs of 30 or higher—people considered to have obesity—amounted to 35.7 percent. Those considered to have extreme obesity, with BMIs of 40 or higher, amounted to 6.3 percent.

Source: NHANES, 2009–2010

### Estimated Percentage by Sex



- Men
- Women

According to the bar graph, 74 percent of men had overweight or obesity; 64 percent of women had overweight or obesity. Equal percentages (36) of men and women had obesity. Among men, 4 percent had extreme obesity; the percentage among women was double that of men, at 8 percent.

Source: NHANES, 2009–2010

#### Different Racial and Ethnic Groups—Adults\*

Among Hispanic, black, and white adults age 20 and older: <sup>2</sup>

- Overweight and obesity affect more than 3 in 4 Hispanics (78.8 percent) and blacks (76.7 percent).
- About 2 in 3 whites (66.7 percent) are considered to be overweight or obese.
- About half of blacks (49.5 percent), and more than 1 in 3 Hispanics (39.1 percent) and whites (34.3 percent) are considered to be obese.
- Extreme obesity affects more than 1 in 10 blacks (13.1 percent), and about 1 in 20 whites (5.7 percent) and Hispanics (5 percent).

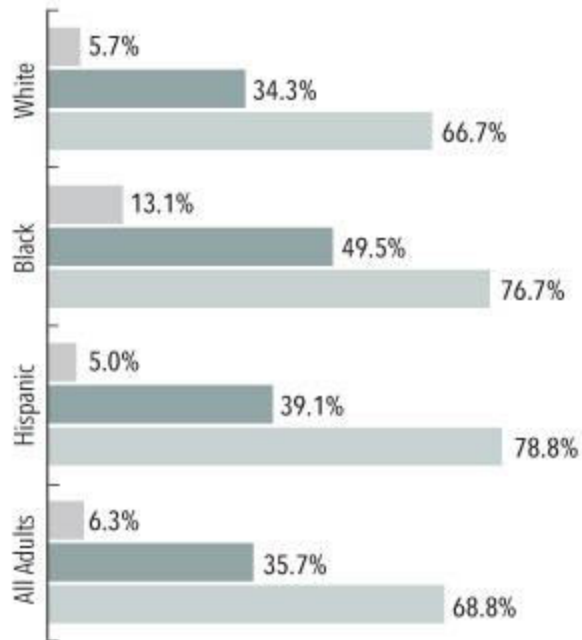
Rates of obesity among Asian Americans are much lower than among other racial and ethnic groups. The following are general prevalence estimates from the 2010 NHIS for adults age 18 and older in these groups who reported being of one race.<sup>4</sup>

- Asian Americans: 11.6 percent
- American Indians and Alaska Natives: 39.9 percent
- Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders: 43.5 percent<sup>†</sup>

† This estimate is based on a small number of respondents (n = 284) in the category of Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders; relative standard error is greater than 30 percent and less than or equal to 50 percent.

### Overweight and Obesity among Adults Age 20 and Older, United States, 2009–2010

#### Estimated Percentage by Race/Ethnicity\*



■ Overweight or Obesity ■ Obesity ■ Extreme obesity

According to the bar graph, among white people, 66.7 percent were considered overweight or obese, 34.3 percent were considered obese, and 5.7 percent were considered to have extreme obesity. Among black people, 76.7 percent were considered overweight or obese, 49.5 percent were considered obese, and 13.1 percent were considered to have extreme obesity. Among Hispanic people, 78.8 percent were considered overweight or obese, 39.1 percent were considered obese, and 5 percent were considered to have extreme obesity. Among adults in the United States in all racial categories, 68.8 percent were considered overweight or obese, 35.7 percent were considered obese, and 6.3 percent were considered to have extreme obesity.

Source: NHANES, 2009–2010

## Estimated Percentage of Youth with Overweight or Obesity, United States, 2009–2011

### Children and Adolescents

Young children ages 2 to 5 have a lower prevalence of overweight and obesity than older youth.

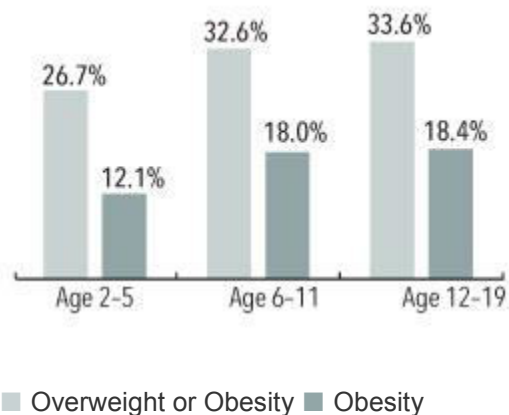
Among young people ages 2 to 19:

- About 31.8 percent are considered to be either overweight or obese, and 16.9 percent are considered to be obese.
- About 1 in 3 boys (33 percent) are considered to be overweight or obese, compared with 30.4 percent of girls.
- About 18.6 percent of boys and 15 percent of girls are considered to be obese.

Among children and adolescents ages 6 to 19:

- Almost 1 in 3 (33.2 percent) are considered to be overweight or obese, and 18.2 percent are considered to be obese.
- More than 2 in 5 black and Hispanic youth (more than 41 percent) are considered to be overweight or obese.\*
- About 25.7 percent of black, 22.9 percent of Hispanic, and 15.2 percent of white youth are considered to be obese.\*

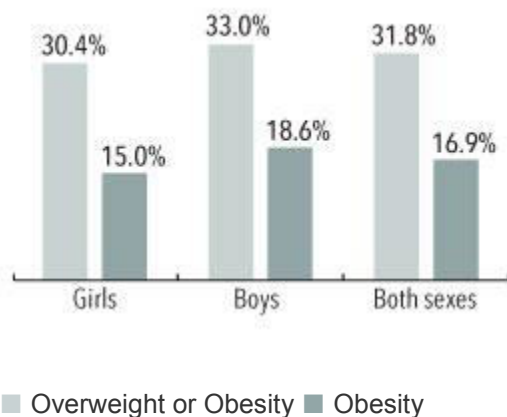
### Percentage by Age Group, Ages 2–19



According to the bar graph, among people ages 2–5, 26.7 percent had overweight or obesity, and 12.1 percent had obesity. Among people ages 6–11, 32.6 percent had overweight or obesity, and 18 percent had obesity. Among people ages 12–19, 33.6 percent had overweight or obesity, and 18.4 percent had obesity.

Source: NHANES, 2009–2010

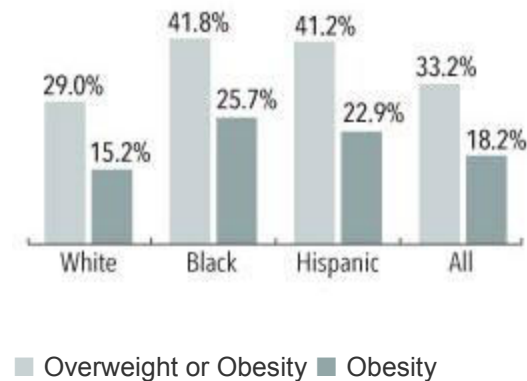
### Percentage by Sex, Ages 2–19



According to the bar graph, among girls, 30.4 percent had overweight or obesity, and 15 percent had obesity. Among boys, 33 percent had overweight or obesity, and 18.6 percent had obesity. Across youth of both sexes, 31.8 percent had overweight or obesity, and 16.9 percent had obesity.

Source: NHANES, 2009–2010

### Percentage by Race/Ethnicity, Ages 6–19\*



According to the bar graph, among white youth, 29 percent had overweight or obesity, and 15.2 percent had obesity. Among black youth, 41.8 percent had overweight or obesity, and 25.7 percent had obesity. Among Hispanic youth, 41.2 percent had overweight or obesity, and 22.9 percent had obesity. Across youth ages 6 to 19 of all races, 33.2 percent had overweight or obesity, and 18.2 percent had obesity.

Source: NHANES, 2009–2010

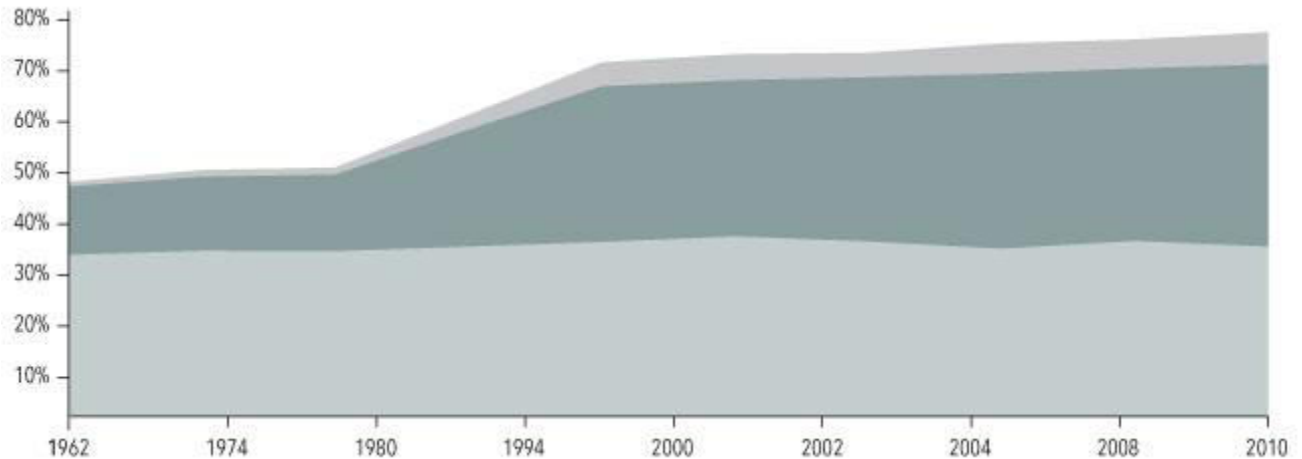
### Trends in Overweight and Obesity among Adults, United States, 1962–2010\*\*

#### Changes over Time\*

- Since the early 1960s, the prevalence of obesity among adults more than doubled, increasing from 13.4 to 35.7 percent in U.S. adults age 20 and older. <sup>2, 5</sup>
- Obesity prevalence remained mostly stable from 1999 to 2010, but has increased slightly, yet in a statistically significant way, among men overall, as well as among black women and Mexican American women. <sup>2</sup>
- Among children and adolescents, the prevalence of obesity also increased in the 1980s and 1990s but is now mostly stable at about 17 percent. <sup>3</sup>

\*\*"Blacks" refers to non-Hispanic blacks, and "whites" refers to non-Hispanic whites.





■ Overweight ■ Obesity ■ Extreme obesity

According to the graph, as of 1962, about 46 percent of adults in the United States fell into the categories of overweight, obesity, and extreme obesity. About 32 percent of adults were overweight, about 13 percent were obese, and about 1 percent had extreme obesity.

Percentages of adults within all of these categories increased gradually until the late 1970s, at which point they began to climb more quickly, leveling off somewhat around 2000. The increase was most dramatic within the obesity category, while the percentage of overweight adults held fairly steady, and the percentage of adults with extreme obesity increased moderately. Around 2000, about 70 percent of adults were considered overweight, obese, or extremely obese. Of this group, 34 percent were considered overweight, about 31 percent were considered obese, and about 5 percent were considered to have extreme obesity.

By 2010, the percentage of adults considered overweight, obese, or extremely obese had climbed to about 75. About 33 percent were considered overweight, about 36 percent were considered obese, and about 6 percent were considered extremely obese.

Source: Ogden & Carroll, 2010; Flegal et al., 2012

\*\*Data for 1960–1980 are for adults ages 20 to 74; data for 1988–2010 are for adults age 20 and older

## Physical Activity Statistics

### Adults

#### Research Findings

- Research suggests that staying active may lower a person's chance of getting heart disease, stroke, some cancers, type 2 diabetes, and other conditions.
- Researchers believe that some physical activity is better than none. Extra health benefits can be gained by increasing how often and intensely one exercises and how long each session lasts.

Government guidelines recommend that healthy adults take part in aerobic activity of moderate intensity for at least 150 minutes a week or vigorous intensity for 75 minutes a week.<sup>6</sup> Aerobic activity uses large muscles such as the legs and back and makes the heart beat faster. In addition, the guidelines recommend that people do activities that strengthen muscles (such as weight training or push-ups) at least twice a week.

Some studies measure physical activity by people's self-report of what they do. Other studies use a tool that records movement as it occurs. Researchers consider the studies using tools to be more accurate. A study conducted in 2003–2004 that used this type of tool to measure physical activity found that only about 3 to 5 percent of adults meet these recommendations.<sup>7</sup>

## **Children and Adolescent**

The physical activity guidelines also recommend that children and youth get at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily.

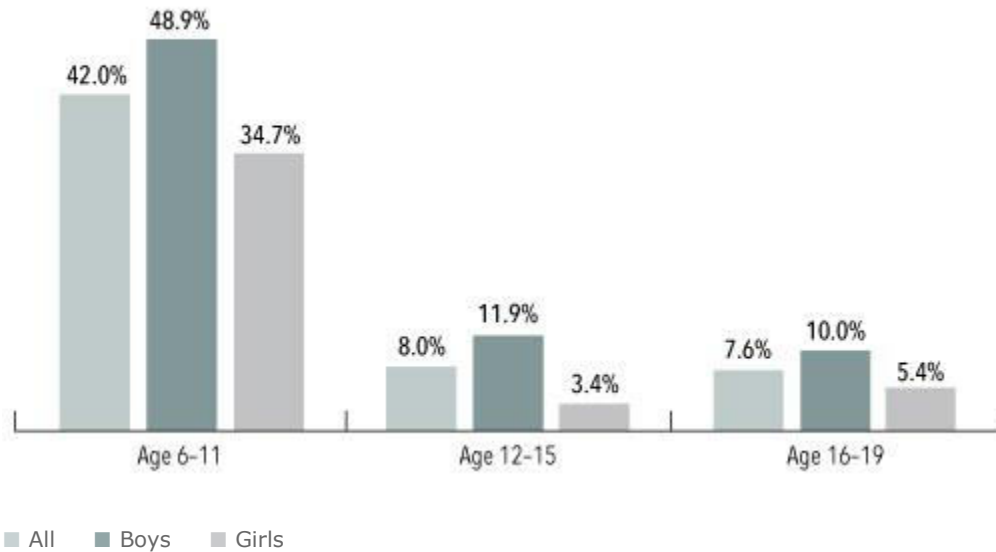
## **Research Findings**

Findings from a study<sup>7</sup> conducted in 2003–2004 that measured physical activity using a tool that records movement suggest the following:

- In the age group of 6 to 11, almost half of boys (49 percent) and about a third of girls (35 percent) get the recommended amount of physical activity.
- Physical activity declines with age. While 42 percent of children ages 6 to 11 get 60 minutes a day of physical activity, only about 8 percent of adolescents ages 12 to 15 reach this goal.

At all ages, girls have lower levels of physical activity than boys.

**Children and Adolescents Ages 6–19 Getting at Least 60 Minutes per Day of Physical Activity, United States, 2003–2004**



The bar graph presents percentages for different age ranges, and it shows percentages of boys, girls, and all children within the ranges doing 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity. The leftmost part of the graph shows data on children ages 6–11. For children in that age range, 42 percent were getting at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day. Among boys, 48.9 percent were getting 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity, and among girls, the proportion was 34.7 percent. The middle of the graph shows data on youth ages 12–15. For youth within this age range, 8 percent were getting at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Among boys, the percentage was 11.9, and among girls, the percentage was 3.4. The right part of the graph shows percentages for youth ages 16–19. For youth within this age range, 7.6 percent were getting at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Among boys, 10 percent were doing 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity, and among girls, 5.4 percent were doing 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day. In general, many more young children than older ones were doing at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily.

Source: Troiano et al., 2008

## References

1. National Institutes of Health. Clinical guidelines on the identification, evaluation, and treatment of overweight and obesity in adults: The evidence report. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; September 1998. NIH Publication No. 98–4083. Available online: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-pro/guidelines/archive/clinical-guidelines-obesity-adults-evidence-report>External NIH Link
2. Flegal KM, Carroll MD, Kit BK, Ogden CL. Prevalence of obesity and trends in the distribution of body mass index among US adults, 1999–2010. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2012; 307(5):491–97. Available online: <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1104933>External Link Disclaimer
3. Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Kit BK, Flegal KM. Prevalence of obesity and trends in body mass index among US children and adolescents, 1999–2010. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2012; 307(5):483–90. Available online: <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/Mobile/article.aspx?articleid=1104932>External Link Disclaimer
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Summary health statistics for U.S. adults: National Health Interview Survey, 2010. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. Vital and Health Statistics 10(252); 2012. Available online: [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr\\_10/sr10\\_252.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_10/sr10_252.pdf) [PDF - 3.8 Mb]External Link Disclaimer

5. Ogden CL, Carroll MD. Prevalence of overweight, obesity, and extreme obesity among adults: United States, trends 1960–1962 through 2007–2008. NCHS Health E-Stat. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics; 2010. Available online: [http://www.cdc.gov/NCHS/data/hestat/obesity\\_adult\\_07\\_08/obesity\\_adult\\_07\\_08.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/NCHS/data/hestat/obesity_adult_07_08/obesity_adult_07_08.pdf) [PDF - 202.5 Kb] [External Link Disclaimer](#)
6. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. ODPHP Publication No. U0036. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available online: <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/> [External Link Disclaimer](#)
7. Troiano RP, Berrigan D, Dodd KW, Mâsse LC, Tilert T, McDowell M. Physical activity in the United States measured by accelerometer. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*. 2008;40(1):181–188. Available online: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18091006> [External NIH Link](#)

## **Additional Reading from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

### **Obesity and Socioeconomic Status in Adults: United States, 2005–2008**

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db50.htm> [External Link Disclaimer](#)

### **Obesity and Socioeconomic Status in Children and Adolescents: United States, 2005–2008**

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db51.htm> [External Link Disclaimer](#)

### **Prevalence of Obesity in the United States, 2009–2010**

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db82.htm> [External Link Disclaimer](#)

---

This content is provided as a service of the [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#) (NIDDK), part of the National Institutes of Health. The NIDDK translates and disseminates research findings through its clearinghouses and education programs to increase knowledge and understanding about health and disease among patients, health professionals, and the public. Content produced by the NIDDK is carefully reviewed by NIDDK scientists and other experts.

The NIDDK would like to thank:

Cheryl Fryar, M.S.P.H., and Cynthia Ogden, Ph.D., M.R.P., both of the National Center for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for reviewing this fact sheet.

This information is not copyrighted. The NIDDK encourages people to share this content freely.

---

