

State Obesity Rates for Adults

1. Mississippi 33.8%	17. Georgia 28.1%	35. New Hampshire 25.4%
2. Alabama 31.6%	17. Indiana 28.1%	36. New York 25.1%
3. Tennessee 31.6%	20. Delaware 27.9%	36. Florida 25.1%
4. West Virginia 31.3%	21. North Dakota 27.7%	36. Idaho 25.1%
5. Louisiana 31.2%	22. Iowa 27.6%	39. Oregon 25.0%
6. Oklahoma 30.6%	23. Nebraska 27.3%	39. Wyoming 25.0%
7. Kentucky 30.5%	24. Alaska 26.9%	41. California 24.4%
8. Arkansas 30.1%	24. Wisconsin 26.9%	42. New Jersey 23.9%
9. South Carolina 29.9%	26. Illinois 26.6%	43. Montana 23.5%
10. North Carolina 29.4%	26. Maryland 26.6%	44. Utah 23.2%
10. Michigan 29.4%	28. Washington 26.3%	45. Rhode Island 22.9%
12. Missouri 29.3%	29. Maine 25.8%	46. Vermont 22.8%
13. Ohio 29.0%	29. Arizona 25.8%	47. Hawaii 22.6%
13. Texas 29.0%	31. Nevada 25.6%	48. Massachusetts 21.7%
15. South Dakota 28.5%	32. Virginia 25.5%	49. D.C. 21.5%
16. Kansas 28.2%	32. Minnesota 25.5%	50. Connecticut 21.4%
17. Pennsylvania 28.1%	32. New Mexico 25.5%	51. Colorado 19.1%

Although childhood obesity appears to be stabilizing, adult obesity is continuing its relentless rise. Twenty-eight states continued the decades-long weight gain. **Two-thirds of Americans are now either overweight (defined as a body mass index of 25 or higher) or obese (a 30-plus BMI).** The rise of obesity has been stunningly rapid. As recently as 1980, just 15 percent of adults were heavy enough to be defined as obese. By 2008, however, the rate had hit 34 percent. Although some experts dispute the causes of the change, with nearly 10% of health costs linked to obesity, no one disputes that it is a public health crisis.

The report revealed these key findings:

- For the sixth year in a row, Mississippi topped the scales. A 33.8 percent rate of adult obesity made the Magnolia state the worst in the nation.
- Tied for second were Alabama and Tennessee, followed respectively by West Virginia, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arkansas and South Carolina.
- North Carolina tied the only Northern state to make the top ten—Michigan—for tenth place in terms of highest levels of adult obesity, with a rate of 29.4 percent.
- Mississippi was also worst for obesity among children aged 10-17, with a whopping 21.9 percent of children being seriously overweight.
- Louisiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia and Arkansas were all in the top ten for childhood as well as adult obesity—but Oklahoma, Michigan, and the Carolinas were replaced here by Illinois, Texas, Georgia and, oddly, Washington, D.C.
- The states who fared best on adult obesity are concentrated in the north and west, with Colorado, Connecticut and Washington D.C. leading the pack, followed by Massachusetts, Hawaii, Vermont, Rhode Island, Utah, Montana and New Jersey. While it may seem unusual that D.C. would be in the top ten best places for adult obesity and ten worst for children, because it is really a city not a state, it's hard to make truly reliable comparisons.

Iowa Ranks 22nd Most Obese State in the Nation

Iowa was named the 22nd most obese state in the country. The **state's adult obesity rate is 27.6 percent**, and, in Iowa men are more obese than women at 29.6 percent. Now more than two-thirds of states (38) have adult obesity rates above 25 percent.

The report highlights troubling **racial and ethnic disparities** in obesity rates. For instance, adult obesity rates for Blacks and Latinos were higher than for Whites in at least 40 states and the District of Columbia. In Iowa, the adult obesity rate was 34.1 percent among Blacks (ranks 37th) and 29.4 percent among Latinos (ranks 22nd), compared with 27.5 percent among Whites.

Obesity rates among youths ages 10-17 from the 2007 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) also were included in the 2009 F as in Fat report; **11.2 percent of Iowa children were obese**, with the state ranking 46th out of the 50 states and D.C. for childhood obesity. Data collection for the next NSCH will begin in 2011. Currently, more than 12 million children and adolescents in the United States are considered obese.

The report also included the results of a new poll on childhood obesity conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and American Viewpoint. The poll shows that 80 percent of Americans recognize that childhood obesity is a significant and growing challenge for the country, and 50 percent of Americans believe childhood obesity is such an important issue that we need to invest more to prevent it immediately. The survey also found that 84 percent of parents believe their children are at a healthy weight, but research shows nearly one-third of children and teens are obese or overweight.

Additional key findings include:

- Adult obesity rates for Blacks topped 40 percent in nine states, 35 percent in 34 states, and 30 percent in 43 states and D.C.
- Rates of adult obesity for Latinos were above 35 percent in two states (North Dakota and Tennessee) and at 30 percent and above in 19 states.
- Ten of the 11 states with the highest rates of diabetes are in the South, as are the 10 states with the highest rates of hypertension.
- No state had rates of adult obesity above 35 percent for Whites. Only one state - West Virginia - had an adult obesity rate for Whites greater than 30 percent.
- The number of states where adult obesity rates exceed 30 percent doubled in the past year, from four to eight - Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and West Virginia.
- Northeastern and Western states had the lowest adult obesity rates; Colorado remained the lowest at 19.1 percent.

The report found that the federal government and many states are undertaking a wide range of policy initiatives to address the obesity crisis. Some key findings include:

At the state level:

- **Iowa** set nutritional standards for school lunches, breakfasts, and snacks that are stricter than current United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements. Twenty states and D.C. have set such standards. Five years ago, only four states had legislation requiring stricter standards
- **Iowa** does not have nutritional standards for competitive foods sold in schools on á la carte lines, in vending machines, in school stores, or through school bake sales. Twenty-eight states and D.C. have nutritional standards for competitive foods. Five years ago, only six states had such standards.
- **Iowa** has passed requirements for body mass index (BMI) screenings of children and adolescents or legislation requiring other forms of weight-related assessments in schools. Twenty states have passed such requirements for BMI screenings. Five years ago, only four states had passed screening requirements.
- **Iowa** has not passed Complete Streets legislation, which aims to ensure that all users -- pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities -- have safe access to a community's streets. Thirteen states have passed Complete Streets legislation.

Source: "F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future 2010" - June 2010, by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Trust for America's Health

