

Obesity, Nutrition, and Physical Activity in Wisconsin

Wisconsin Department of Health Services | Division of Public Health | Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program
and Wisconsin Partnership for Activity and Nutrition 2008

Executive Summary



The Problem of Overweight and Obesity in Wisconsin

Overweight and Obesity Pose a Significant Health Threat to Wisconsin Residents

Did you know that...

Wisconsin's obesity rate ranked 16th highest in the country in 2006.

- Since 1990, the obesity rate for adults has more than doubled.
- Nearly 27% of adults are obese and about 65% are overweight or obese.
- 46% of women participating in the Wisconsin Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) are either overweight or obese prior to pregnancy.

Obesity in adults is associated with many chronic diseases and poor health outcomes.

- Obesity is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, certain cancers, asthma, arthritis, high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, and depression.
- Obesity is related to poor reproductive outcomes, including infertility, hypertension or diabetes during pregnancy, cesarean birth, birth trauma, and stillbirth.

Obesity is placing an economic strain on the healthcare system.

- The annual economic cost of obesity-related medical expenses for Wisconsin is estimated at more than \$1.5 billion annually.

Many Wisconsin children and adolescents are also affected by overweight or obesity.

- One in four Wisconsin high school students are overweight or obese.
- 29% of the two- through four-year-old children participating in the WIC Program are overweight or obese.

Children and adolescents are increasingly being diagnosed with adult illnesses.

- Obese youth are more likely to have sleep apnea, asthma and orthopedic problems.
- More than half of obese children in elementary school have at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease, and a quarter have at least two risk factors.
- Of the children who are obese at ages 3-4 years, 20-40% are destined to be obese as adults.
- About 60% of obese adolescents will be obese as adults.
- Unless the obesity epidemic can be curbed, today's children are likely to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents do.



The Burden of Overweight and Obesity in Wisconsin is Not Shared Equally Among Its Residents or Communities

Notable differences in the rates of overweight and obesity are apparent by age, sex, racial or ethnic group, socioeconomic status, and location.

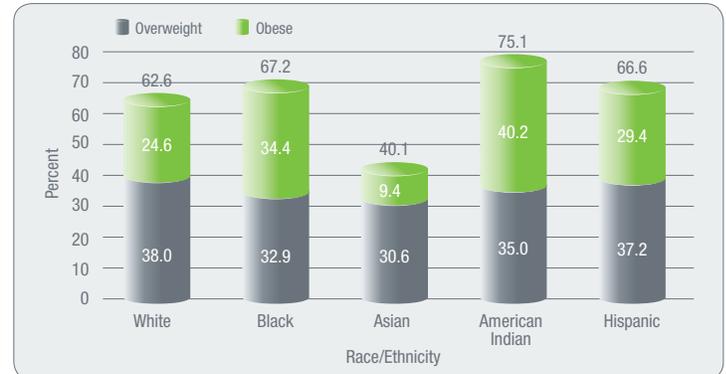
Adults:

- Asians have a low obesity rate, relative to rates for all other racial or ethnic groups.
- Compared with females, males are about a third more likely to be either overweight or obese.
- For males, American Indians have a high obesity rate, relative to the rates for Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics.
- For females, American Indians, Blacks, and Hispanics have higher obesity rates, relative to the rate for Whites.
- About 45% of adults under the age of 30 are already either overweight or obese.
- For adults in their fifties and sixties, about 13 in 20 females and 16 in 20 males are either overweight or obese.
- Adults with a household income of less than \$15,000/year have an obesity rate of 34%, while those earning at least \$50,000 have a rate of 24%.
- Between half and three-quarters of adults in each county are either overweight or obese.

Children and Adolescents:

- The percentage of overweight or obese high schools students is 25% for Wisconsin and 37% for the Milwaukee Public School District.
- Male high school students have an obesity rate that is more than twice that of their female counterparts.
- For high school students, 24% of Black females are overweight or obese, compared with 18% of White females.
- 43% of the two- through four-year-old American Indian children participating in the WIC Program are overweight or obese. This value compares with a rate of 37% for Hispanics, 31% for Asians, 27% for Whites, and 24% for Blacks.
- The percentage of two- through four-year-old children participating in the WIC Program who are either overweight or obese varies three-fold by county, from 15% to 46%.

Prevalence of Overweight, Obesity, and Total Overweight (Overweight or Obesity) for Wisconsin Adults by Race/Ethnicity, 2004-2006.



Data source: 2004-2006 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

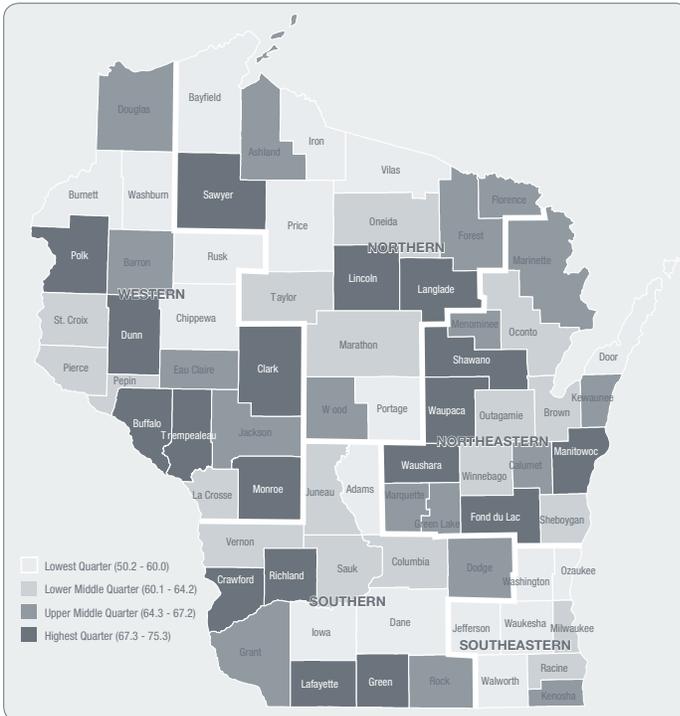
Prevalence of Overweight, Obesity, and Total Overweight for Wisconsin Adults by Age and Sex, 2004-2006.



Data source: 2004-2006 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

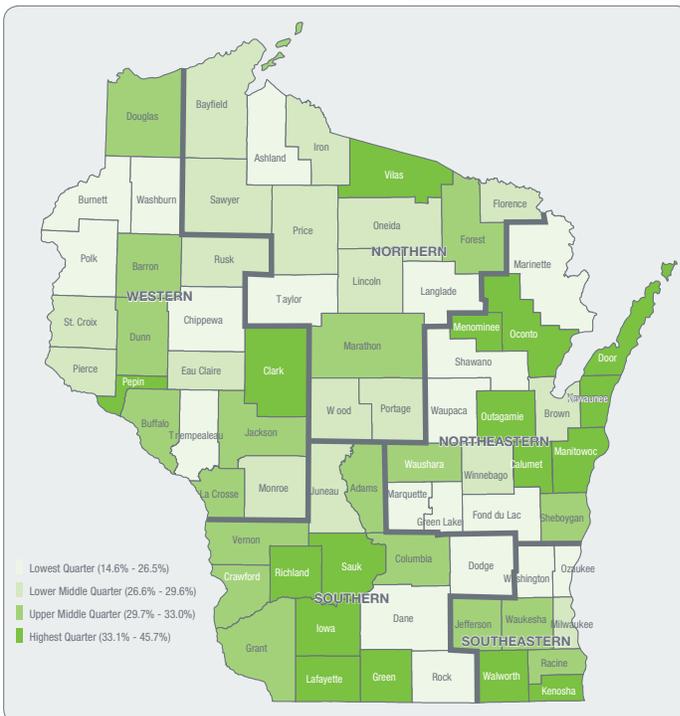


Adult Total Overweight Prevalence for Wisconsin Counties by Quartile, 2004-2006.



Data source: 2004-2006 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Values were provided by the Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Total Overweight Prevalence in Wisconsin Counties by Quartile for Children, Aged Two Through Four, Participating in the Wisconsin WIC Program, 2004-2006.



Data source: 2004-2006 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Remedying the Obesity Problem in Wisconsin Will Require Effort and Commitment by Communities, Organizations, and Individuals Across the State

There is a crucial need for strategic action at both the state and local levels to counter the obesity problem in Wisconsin and thus greatly improve the health and well-being of its residents.

Become part of the solution

Successfully reversing obesity rates in Wisconsin will require the active involvement of numerous partners across the state: individuals, schools, early childhood education and care organizations, workplaces, restaurants and grocery stores, food producers and vendors, healthcare systems and providers, media, community-based and faith-based organizations, policymakers, state and local governments, and other groups.

- Join local efforts to fight obesity by contacting your local public health department and asking whether or not a local coalition is already working on this issue in your area. If not, think about starting one.
- Participate in ongoing coordinated statewide activities to address the obesity issue by joining the Wisconsin Partnership for Activity and Nutrition.
- Take advantage of the resources and technical assistance provided by the Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (available at: <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/>).

Implement the Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity State Plan

The Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity State Plan is a framework to improve nutrition, increase physical activity, and decrease obesity in Wisconsin (available at the above website).

Work to create environments that support healthy behaviors and prevent obesity

Healthful eating, being physically active, and achieving and maintaining a healthy weight are not solely an individual responsibility. It is also the responsibility of families, organizations, communities, and society to help change the environments in which people live, work, and play in ways that encourage good health. (The many layers of influence on health-related behaviors are shown on the right.) Environmental and policy changes are those most likely to reach the largest number of people and have the greatest impact on individual behavior. Key behaviors that ultimately need to change to reduce the burden of obesity in Wisconsin include: being physically active, eating fruits and vegetables, breastfeeding, limiting the consumption of sweetened beverages and high energy dense foods, and restricting television viewing time.



Learn more...

- To participate in obesity prevention and control efforts in keeping with the Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity State Plan and to obtain resources for doing so, please visit our website at <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/>.
- For additional information about the obesity problem in Wisconsin, please read this important new report, Obesity, Nutrition, and Physical Activity in Wisconsin, also available on our website.

Wisconsin Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program

The Wisconsin Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program (NPAO) is one of 23 state programs awarded a five-year (2008-2013) cooperative agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The purpose of the cooperative agreement is to improve healthful eating and physical activity to prevent and control obesity and other chronic diseases. This is to be done by building and sustaining statewide capacity to address the issue in the population and by implementing relevant strategies and interventions. A few of the resources developed by the NPAO Program and its partners for these purposes (available at: <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity>) include:

- Summary sheets containing evidence-based strategies within specific settings: What Works in Schools, Worksites, or Healthcare
- Wisconsin Worksite Wellness Resource Kit
- Got Dirt? Gardening Initiative Toolkit
- Active Community Environments Resource Kit
- Ten Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Centers Resource Kit
- Improving Access to Fruits and Vegetables Resource Kit
- Governor's School Health Award and Worksite Wellness Award

Wisconsin Partnership for Activity and Nutrition

The Wisconsin Partnership for Activity and Nutrition (WI PAN) developed and is implementing the Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity State Plan. WIPAN is comprised of over 200 members representing a variety of public and private organizations, programs, and coalitions. The mission of WIPAN is to improve the health of Wisconsin residents by decreasing overweight and obesity, improving nutrition and increasing physical activity. This mission will be accomplished by:

- Planning, implementing and evaluating a state plan for nutrition and physical activity to prevent and manage obesity and chronic diseases.
- Serving as a resource for nutrition and physical activity information.
- Coordinating nutrition and physical activity efforts to prevent and manage obesity and chronic diseases.
- Advocating for public health policy change at all levels.
- Encouraging individual and population based lifestyle changes.

For more information:

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