FACT SHEET

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OBESITY IN AMERICA

PREVALENCE

- Obesity is a life-threatening disease affecting 34% of adults in the U.S.; 68% of adults are either overweight or obese\(^1,2\)
- Between 2000 and 2005, obesity (BMI \(\geq 30\)) increased by 24%, morbid obesity (BMI \(\geq 40\)) increased by 50% and super obesity (BMI \(\geq 50\)) increased by 75%\(^3\)
- In 2008, only one state (Colorado) had a prevalence of obesity less than 20%. Thirty-two states had a prevalence equal to or greater than 25%; six of these states (Alabama, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia) had a prevalence of obesity equal to or greater than 30%\(^4\)

COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH OBESITY

- 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\(^5\)
- Obese individuals spend 40% more on health care than individuals of normal weight\(^6\)
- Lost productivity related to obesity among Americans ages 17 to 64 costs $3.9 billion a year\(^7\)
- Diseases associated with obesity account for 27% of the increases in medical costs since 1987;\(^8\) spending related to diabetes alone totals $190 billion a year\(^5\)

OBESITY IN CHILDREN/TEENS

- As of 2007, 32% of children aged 10-17 in the U.S. are overweight and 16% are obese;\(^9\) childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years\(^10\)
- As of 2006, 11% of preschoolers ages 2 to 5, 15% of children ages 6 to 11 and 18% of adolescents ages 12 to 19 are overweight;\(^1\) as of 2004, 4% of children age 2-19 are considered severely obese\(^11\)
- Overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults. This increases to 80% if a parent is overweight or obese\(^12\)
- One in five American 4-year-olds are considered obese and the rate is higher among American Indian children, with nearly a third of them obese\(^13\)
- A study of 5- to 17-year-olds found that 70% of obese children had at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease and 39% of obese children had at least two risk factors\(^8\)

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO OBESITY

- Genetics: According to the National Institute of Health, several studies have shown that adopted children have weights closer to their biological parents than to their adoptive parents
- Metabolism: The resting metabolic rate (RMR) – the energy needed to keep the body functioning at rest – can vary substantially from one person to another, which may help explain why some people gain weight quicker than others and find it more difficult to lose weight
- Culture: Foods specific to certain cultures can contribute to obesity. Research also shows that individuals originally from other countries have difficulty adjusting to the calorie-rich foods offered in the U.S.
- Illness: Hypothyroidism, Cushing’s Syndrome and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome are a few of the medical conditions that are associated with weight gain
- Environment: Lifestyle, dietary habits and physical activity have a particularly strong influence on the likelihood of being or becoming obese
- Psychological issues: Many people overeat or binge to suppress emotions or escape from problems

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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 and cancer. Other conditions include: asthma, osteoarthritis, joint degeneration, cirrhosis of the liver, venous stasis disease, infertility, pregnancy complications, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), chronic headaches, liver disease, sleep apnea, lower back pain and urinary incontinence.

- Obesity is associated with 112,000 excess U.S. deaths each year; obese individuals have a 10 to 50% increased risk of death compared to individuals of healthy weight7.

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:
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  \text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight in kilograms}}{\text{Height in meters}^2}
  \]

- **Super obese**: A person with a BMI of 50 or more
  - 50,000 adults are super obese in the U.S.

- **Morbidly obese**: A person with a 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 a BMI of 30 – 39.9
  - 64 million adults are obese in the U.S.

- **Overweight**: A person with a BMI of 25 – 29.9
  - 134 million adults are overweight or obese in the U.S.

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