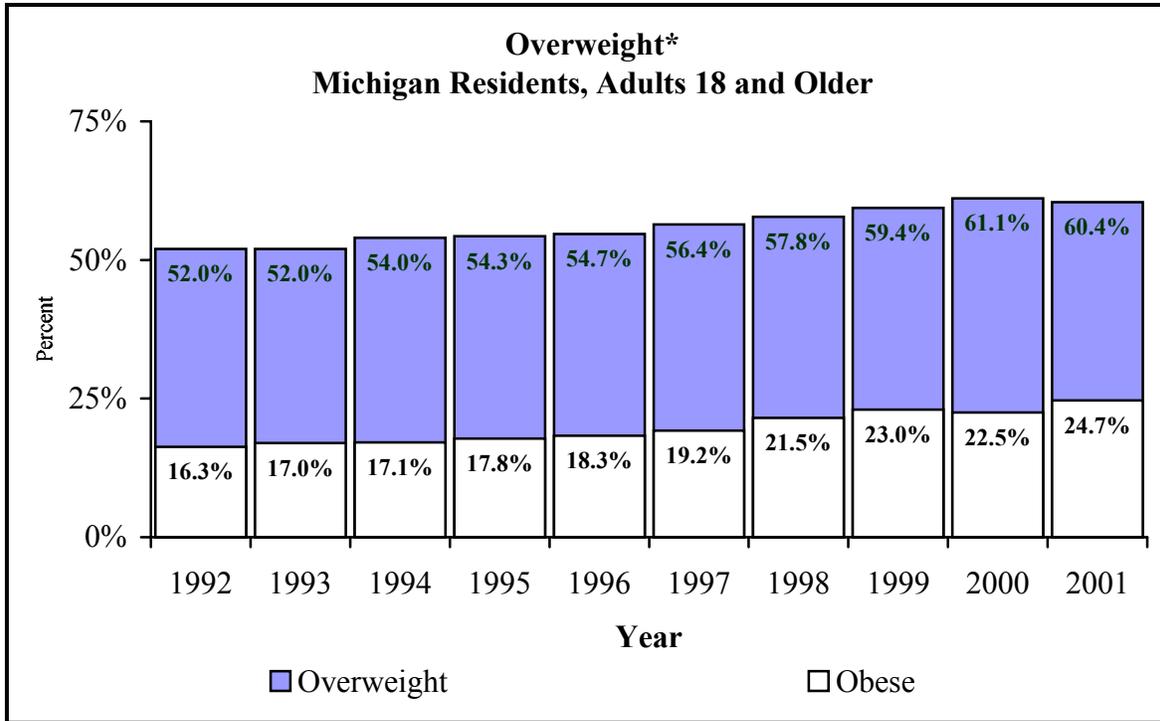


Focused Indicators Health Risk Behaviors *Overweight*



* See Technical Notes Section for definition change.
Source: Bureau of Epidemiology, MDCH, 2003

How are we doing?

Overweight is mainly the result of poor diet, lack of physical activity, environmental barriers to achieve healthy behaviors, genetics, or any combination of these factors. Poor diet and lack of physical activity are second only to smoking as causes of preventable death. Someone who is overweight is more likely to die prematurely than a person in a healthy weight range.

The 2001 Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFSS) indicates that 60.4 percent of Michigan adults are overweight. Among all Michigan adults, 24.7 percent are obese. The proportion of the adult population that is overweight has been steadily increasing from 52.0 percent in 1992 to 60.4 percent in 2001. Survey respondents are asked for their height and weight, which is then used to calculate a body mass index (BMI).

For more information about body mass index and calculations for children and adults, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/index.htm>

How does Michigan compare to other states?

The proportion of adults who are overweight has been increasing in both Michigan and the nation, but Michigan has among the highest rates. In 2001, the prevalence of adults overweight in Michigan was 60.4 percent while the median among all the states was 58.2 percent.

How are different populations affected?

According to the 2001 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), the proportion of Michigan adults who were obese tended to increase through the 55-64 year old age group and then decrease. African Americans were more likely to be obese than Caucasians. In addition, adults with less than a high school education were more likely to be obese (27.6%) than those who had graduated from college (20.1%).

For more information about adult health risk behaviors, visit the Michigan Department of Community Health Web site at www.michigan.gov/mdch

What other information is important to know?

Overweight and obesity have been linked to several serious medical conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke. They are also associated with higher rates of certain types of cancer.

Recommendations for reducing overweight should include consultation with medical professionals; a diet low in fat, rich in high-fiber and complex-carbohydrate foods; and an increase in moderate physical activity. Overweight individuals frequently do not eat enough fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain foods. About one in five respondents in the 2000 BRFS survey at the USDA recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/>.

Moreover, one in four adults reported that they did not participate in any physical activity during their leisure time in the past month. A widespread increase in moderate physical activity, such as brisk walking, raking leaves, or playing volleyball for 30 minutes a day, could help prevent the development of overweight in a large proportion of the population.

For individuals who are overweight, increased physical activity and improved diet can decrease the risk of developing a chronic disease even without weight loss. A modest weight loss of 5 to 10 percent will decrease risk further. For some people, this is as little as 5 to 10 pounds.

For more information on the national campaign to increase fruit and vegetable consumption through the National Cancer Institute 5-A-Day Program go to <http://dccps.nci.nih.gov/5aday>

What is the Department of Community Health doing to affect this indicator?

The department is actively working to decrease the percent of Michigan residents who are overweight by supporting community programs that address healthy eating and physical activity;

as well as working with partners to create environments that support healthy behaviors in communities, schools, healthcare systems and worksites.

Michigan pregnant and postpartum women are receiving nutrition services that include addressing weight maintenance, overweight and other weight-related topics such as optimal prenatal weight gain within the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program at 249 clinics across the state. The WIC program further provides individualized nutrition counseling and education and health-related referral services to Michigan mothers and children ages birth through four years of age. WIC currently offers Project FRESH, a summer program for WIC participants to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets, and thereby increase fruit and vegetable consumption and improve nutrition status.

WIC serves over 190,000 infants and children each month, measures their height and weight, monitors their growth, and provides positive nutrition messages to encourage physical activity and healthy eating among preschoolers and their families. This is aimed at preventing the development of overweight and obesity. The WIC program also promotes breastfeeding, which has been shown to have an impact in reducing subsequent overweight in children.

The Role of Michigan Schools in Promoting Healthy Weight consensus document was developed in collaboration with the Michigan Department of Education to provide practical guidelines for schools to use to promote healthy weight for all students, along with healthy school environments. In cooperation with the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and the Michigan Fitness Foundation, the department has sponsored the development and distribution of a model physical education curriculum for Michigan schools encouraging lifelong physical activity.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant is helping Michigan focus attention on obesity in African American women through the Healthy Lifestyle Initiative. This initiative developed consensus recommendations to combat obesity and is implementing an intervention with physicians for African American women.

The 5 A Day for Better Health Program works with local partners to promote fruit and vegetable consumption in the context of a low fat, healthy diet.

Collaboration with the Michigan Association of Health Plans Foundation spurred the development of a program called, "Taking on Weight in Michigan." This project integrates core measures for overweight and obesity into best practice models of care by educating providers and improving public awareness to facilitate self-management.

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