

Adult Obesity

About

Weight that is higher than what is considered as a healthy weight for a given height is described as overweight or obese. Nearly one out of four adults in Louisiana is considered obese. Louisiana ranks among the top ten states in the United States – many of which are in the south - for both adult and childhood obesity (2017). However, Louisiana is not alone. Disease trends indicate that obesity is a national problem, contributing to poorer health, chronic disease and major causes of death.

Exercise and a healthy diet are important steps in combatting obesity. A good diet is more than just eating healthy portions of foods. It also means eating the right kinds of nutritious foods which contain essential vitamins and minerals. Together, diet and exercise play a role in the condition of obesity, but they may not fully explain it. Obesity is a complex condition which may be caused by a combination of factors, including environmental factors, or by factors we do not yet know or fully understand. Obesity also appears to play a role in other conditions. While the associations are unclear, obesity is often related to other poor health outcomes and chronic diseases.

More research into the potential contributing factors to obesity is needed. Considering obesity as it relates to environmental health and other health indicators may lead us to discover new ways to make positive changes in Louisiana health outcomes. One potential factor being researched is human exposure to natural or man-made environmental contaminants in air, water or food. Other factors include genetics, poverty, access to parks and green space, access to healthy foods, community safety, level of stress, mental health factors, access to health care, and other medical conditions such as diabetes.

About the Measures

This measure is the percent of the adult population ages 20 and older that has a Body Mass Index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30. BMI is a unit represented as a person's weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters. Although BMI is only a relative measure, it can be used to screen for weight categories that may lead to health problems. It is not a diagnostic of body fat, nor does it convey the health of an individual.

About the Data

Parish-level estimates for adult obesity are restricted to adults aged 20 years and older. They were developed from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention using modern small area estimation techniques. This approach employs a Bayesian multilevel modeling technique that borrows strength in making an estimate for one parish from BRFSS data collected in other parishes. Three years of data were used to improve the precision of year specific small area estimates.

Disclaimer

Data are intended to spur further research and should be used only as a starting point to understanding how the environment and other contributing factors may be connected to disease. Datasets presented

on this site are intended to answer some basic questions, but should ultimately lead to further inquiry and more detailed study.

Data limitations should be noted if conducting exploratory ecological studies with these data. Limitations may include data gaps, reporting discrepancies (for example, a disruption of reporting or instrument recording following hurricanes) and insufficient data on all potentially confounding factors. There are numerous additional factors which may contribute to disease onset. These include genetics, access to health care, existing health conditions, medicines, other chemical substances we come into contact with or ingest, nutrition, route and duration of exposure, level of activity, level of stress, and many others.

Responsible use of this data therefore requires exercising caution when drawing conclusions based solely on views of the limited available data. Any perceived relationship, trend, or pattern apparent in the data should not be interpreted to imply causation; may in fact be unrelated; and should be regarded as preliminary, and potentially erroneous, until more in-depth study and if applicable, statistical evaluation, can be applied. The LDH Bureau of Health Informatics and Environmental Public Health Tracking Program cannot guarantee the completeness of the information contained in these datasets and expressly disclaim liability for errors and omissions in their content.

Data Sources

- [CDC Division of Diabetes Translation](#)
- [CDC Overweight and Obesity](#)
- [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings & Roadmaps](#)

Additional Information

- [LDH Diabetes/Obesity Prevention and Control Program](#)
- [Well Ahead LA](#)
- [CDC Overweight & Obesity](#)
- [CDC About Adult BMI](#)

Questions

- Email: healthdata@la.gov