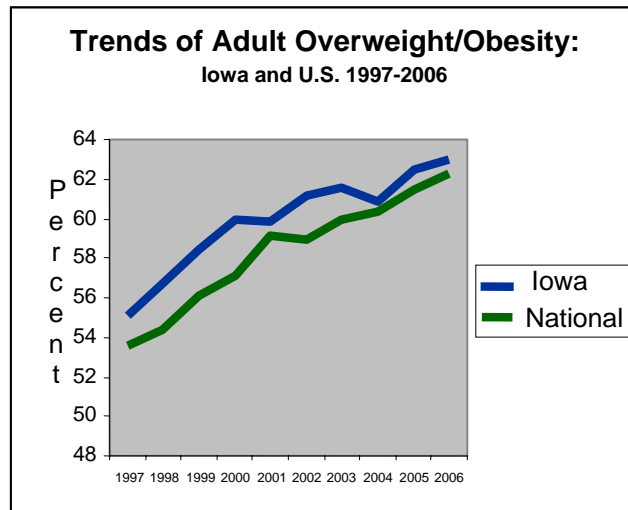
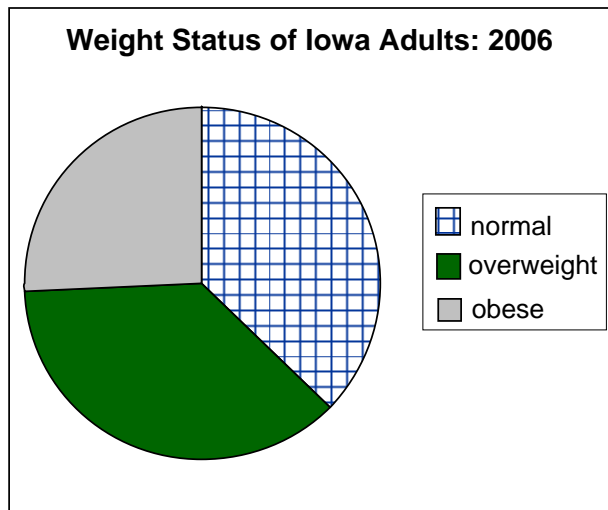


Obesity in Iowa: A Statewide Epidemic

The obesity epidemic is one of the most important health challenges facing Iowa and the nation.

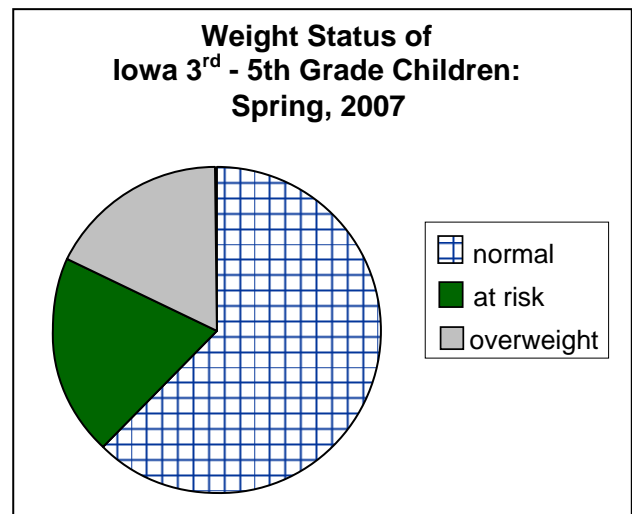
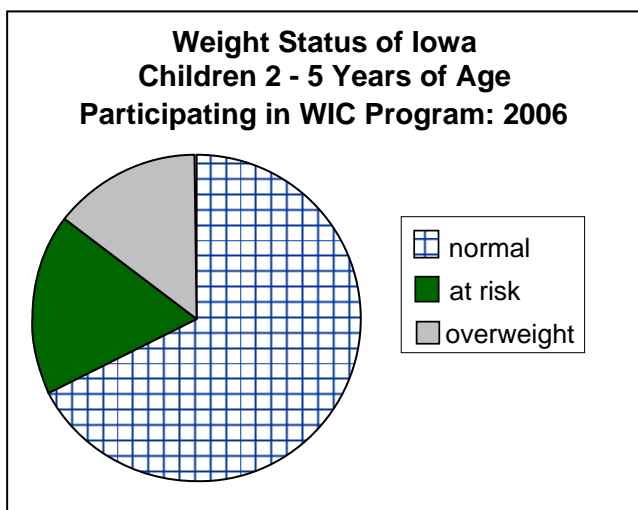
Obesity rates are increasing

- In 2006, 1.4 million Iowans were overweight or obese.¹
- The number of Iowa adults (≥ 18 years of age) who are overweight or obese has increased by 36% over the last 10 years.¹ The national median prevalence rate is 32%.



Children

- Beginning in the fall of 2005, the Iowa Department of Public Health has measured the height and weight of over 4,000 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students in 12 schools across the state. 62.3% of the children had a normal BMI,^a 19.6% were at risk for overweight, and 18.1% were overweight.
- Children enrolled in the WIC program were about 17.9% at risk for overweight and 14.6% overweight.²



Obesity is costly

Obesity reduces economic productivity, increases the risk for chronic disease and premature death, and drives up medical expenses. Everyone pays the price.

- Total annual health care costs attributable to adult obesity in Iowa are estimated at \$783 million (2003 dollars).³
- Close to one-half of these costs are paid by Medicare (\$165 million) and Medicaid (\$198 million).³
- People who are obese spend 36% more on medical expenses each year compared to adults with a healthy weight.⁴
- More than 75 percent of medical care costs are attributable to chronic diseases, which in large part are preventable.⁵
- A recent study estimated annual medical spending due to overweight and obesity (BMI \geq 25) to be as much as \$92.6 billion (2002 dollars), 9.1 percent of U.S. health expenditures.⁶

Obesity can lead to illness

- Obese people are more likely to report poor physical and mental health.⁷
- More than 30 medical conditions are associated with overweight and obesity, diabetes being among the most severe.⁷
- The longer people are overweight and the more overweight they are, the greater their risk of type 2 diabetes.⁸
- Diabetes affects nearly 21 million Americans, 7% of the U.S. population; more than 6 million of those people do not know they have diabetes. This represents an additional 2.6 million people with diabetes since 2002. Another 41 million people are estimated to have pre-diabetes, a condition that increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.⁹
- For every two pound increase in weight, the risk of developing arthritis increases by nine to 13 percent.⁷
- Obese women are more likely to have health problems during pregnancy, labor, and delivery.⁷
- In 2000, it was estimated that 30% of boys and 40% of girls born in the U.S. were at-risk for being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes at some point in their lives. Young people are also at risk of developing serious psychosocial burdens due to societal stigmatization associated with obesity. Obesity-associated annual hospital costs for children and youth more than tripled over two decades, rising from \$35 million in 1979-1981 to \$127 million in 1997-1999.^{9,10,11}

Obesity is associated with an increased risk of:¹²

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| ■ Premature death | ■ Sleep apnea | ■ Hirsutism (excess body & facial hair) |
| ■ Type 2 Diabetes | ■ Asthma | ■ Sleep apnea |
| ■ Heart disease | ■ Breathing problems | ■ Psychological disorders (e.g., depression) |
| ■ Stroke | ■ Cancer (endometrial, colon, kidney, gallbladder, postmenopausal breast cancer) | ■ Psychological difficulties due to social stigmatization |
| ■ Hypertension | ■ High blood cholesterol | ■ Increase surgical risk |
| ■ Gallbladder disease | ■ Pregnancy complications | ■ Stress incontinence (urine leakage caused by weak pelvic-floor muscles) |
| ■ Osteoarthritis (degeneration of cartilage & bone in joints) | ■ Menstrual irregularities | |



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Footnotes

^a Body Mass Index (BMI) is calculated using height and weight. The term “at risk for overweight” is used for children with a BMI between the 85th and 95th percentile (for their age and height) and the term “overweight” if their BMI exceeds the 95th percentile. Among adults, “overweight” is defined as a BMI between the 85th and 95th percentile and “obesity” as a BMI greater than the 95th percentile. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. 1988–94.

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www.idph.state.ia.us/iowansfitforlife

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