

“Vital Signs” has been prepared for the general public rather than a specialized audience. Highly technical information has been summarized and simplified.

CDC *Vital*signs™

August 2010

The illustration at the left provides additional information that emphasizes the scope of the problem identified in the paragraph to the right.

Adult Obesity

Obesity Rises Among Adults

Obesity is common, serious, and costly. In 2009, about 2.4 million more adults were obese than in 2007. This epidemic has affected every part of the United States. In every state, more than 15% of adults are obese, and in nine states, over 30% of adults are obese. The medical care costs of obesity in the United States are staggering. Recent estimates of the annual medical costs are as high as \$147 billion. More efforts are needed, and new federal initiatives are helping to change our communities into places that strongly support healthy eating and active living.

Readers interested in detailed and technical information can follow the links below.

Want to learn more? Visit—

www <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr>

www <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns>

www <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity>

72M+

More than 72 million U.S. adults are obese.

1,429 \$

Persons who are obese have medical costs that are \$1,429 higher than those of normal weight.

Zero

No state has an obesity rate less than 15%, the national goal.

Obesity

Problem

Obesity is a national epidemic, causing higher medical costs and a lower quality of life.

Why do you think the writers chose bullets rather than a table to organize this information?

Some of the bulleted items on this page contain too much information to be scanned quickly. How would you revise these bullets for easy scanning?

1. Obesity is a national epidemic, causing higher medical costs and a lower quality of life.

- ◇ Obesity means having excess body fat. Obesity is defined by body mass index, or BMI, which is calculated from your height and weight.
- ◇ BMI greater than or equal to 30 means you are obese.
- ◇ Non-Hispanic black women and Hispanics have the highest rates of obesity (41.9% and 30.7%).
- ◇ Obesity is a contributing cause of many other health problems, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some types of cancer. These are some of the leading causes of death in the U.S. Obesity can cause sleep apnea and breathing problems and make activity more difficult. Obesity can also cause problems during pregnancy or make it more difficult for a woman to become pregnant.
- ◇ Obese persons require more costly medical care. This places a huge financial burden on our medical care system.

2. Why is this epidemic happening?

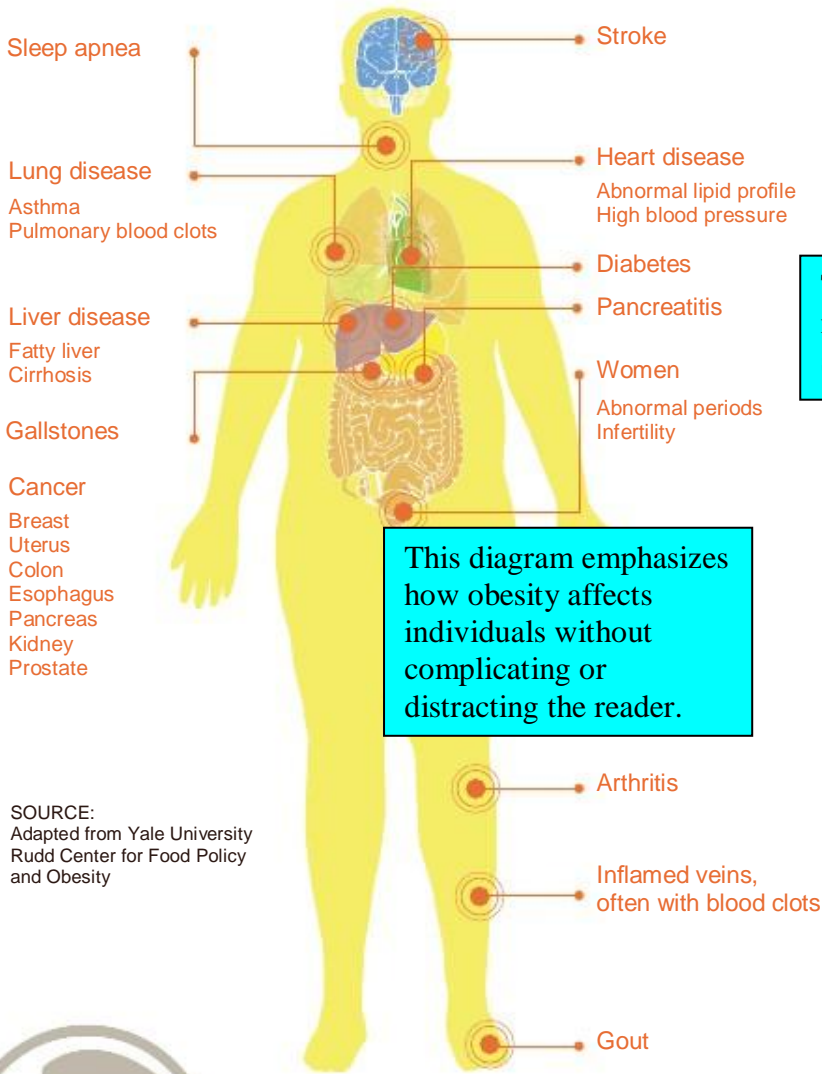
- ◇ Weight gain occurs when people eat too much food and get too little physical activity.
- ◇ Societal and community changes have accompanied the rise in obesity.

- Some Americans have less access to stores and markets that provide healthy, affordable food such as fruits and vegetables, especially in rural, minority and lower-income neighborhoods. Restaurants, snack shops, and vending machines provide food that is often higher in calories and fat than food made at home.
- There is too much sugar in our diet. Six out of 10 adults drink at least 1 sugary drink per day.
- It is often easier and cheaper to get less healthy foods and beverages.
- Foods high in sugar, fat, and salt are frequently advertised and marketed.

◇ Many communities are built in ways that make it difficult or unsafe to be physically active:

- Access to parks and recreation centers may be difficult or lacking and public transportation may not be available.
- Safe routes for walking or biking to school, work, or play may not exist.
- Too few students get quality, daily physical education in school.

Medical Complications of Obesity



This diagram emphasizes how obesity affects individuals without complicating or distracting the reader.

SOURCE:
Adapted from Yale University
Rudd Center for Food Policy
and Obesity

Obesity Table

If you are this tall:	You are obese if you weigh more than.. (lbs)
6'4"	246
6'3"	240
6'2"	234
6'1"	228
6'0"	221
5'11"	215
5'10"	209
5'9"	203
5'8"	197
5'7"	191
5'6"	186
5'5"	180
5'4"	175
5'3"	169
5'2"	164
5'1"	159
5'0"	153

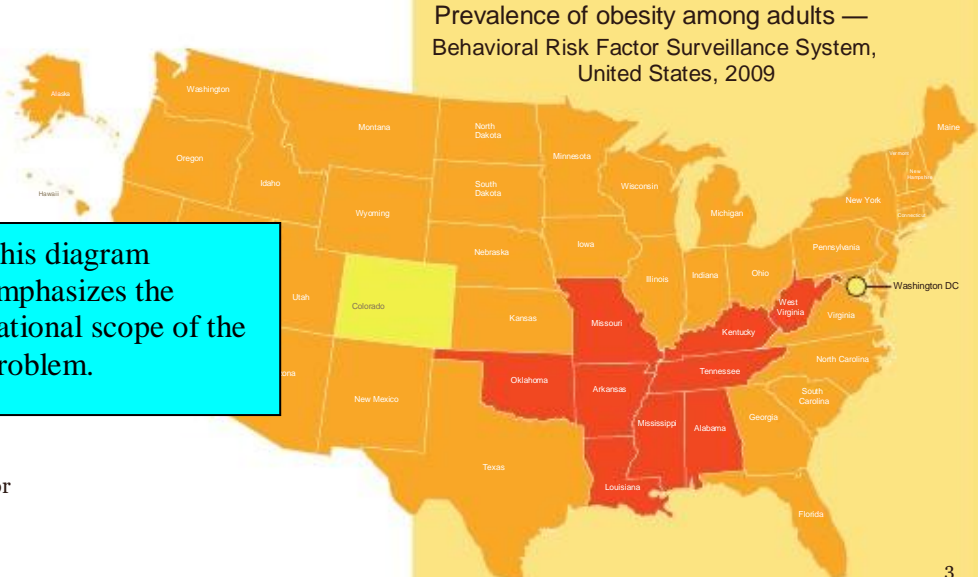
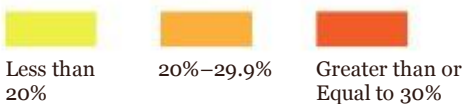
This chart is a simplified version of the more complex table found at the web source listed on the right.

SOURCE:
National Heart,
Lung, and Blood
Institute
TableCalculate
Your Body Mass
Index Web
Site.http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/bmi_tbl.htm

U.S. State Info

The number of people who are obese varies from state to state. For example, 18.6% of Colorado residents are obese, compared with 34.4% of Mississippi residents. In 2009, 9 states had obesity rates of 30% or more compared with no states in 2000.

This diagram emphasizes the national scope of the problem.



What Can Be Done

Obesity is a complex problem that requires action at many levels, for both adults as well as children.



The U.S. Government can

◇ Promote change

- First Lady Michelle Obama recently launched the Let's Move! program which seeks to eliminate childhood obesity within a generation. The campaign's main points of action are:

- Empowering parents and caregivers.
- Providing healthy food in schools.
- Improving access to healthy, affordable foods.
- Increasing physical activity.

See <http://www.letsmove.gov/>

◇ Recommend actions

- In May 2010, The Childhood Obesity Task Force, appointed by President Obama, released 70 recommended actions to prevent and control childhood obesity.

See <http://www.letsmove.gov/obesitytaskforce.php>

- A new CDC program, Communities Putting Prevention to Work,* is designed to improve nutrition and physical activity and prevent and control obesity by changing policies and environments. CDC recently provided \$139 million to 50 states and \$373 million to 30 communities and tribes to fund programs to reverse the obesity epidemic.

*Communities Putting Prevention to Work is a new program included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. It also addresses decreasing tobacco use. See <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/recovery/community.htm>

www.cdc.gov/mmwr

For more information, please contact

Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

TTY: 1-888-232-6348

E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov

Web: www.cdc.gov

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States can

- ◇ Provide supermarkets and farmers' markets with incentives to establish their businesses in low-income areas and to offer healthy foods.
- ◇ Expand programs that bring local fruits and vegetables to schools, businesses, and communities.
- ◇ Support hospital programs that encourage breastfeeding.
- ◇ Adopt policies that promote bicycling and public transportation.



Communities can

- ◇ Create and maintain safe neighborhoods for physical activity and improve access to parks and playgrounds.
- ◇ Advocate for quality physical education in schools and childcare facilities.
- ◇ Encourage breastfeeding through peer-to-peer support programs.
- ◇ Support programs that bring local fruits and vegetables to schools, businesses, and communities.

All people can

- ◇ Eat more fruits and vegetables and fewer foods high in fat and sugar.
See <http://www.mypyramid.gov/>
- ◇ Drink more water instead of sugary drinks.
- ◇ Limit TV watching in kids to less than 2 hours a day and don't put one in their room at all.
- ◇ Support breastfeeding.
- ◇ Promote policies and programs at school, at work, and in the community that make the healthy choice the easy choice.
- ◇ Try going for a 10-minute brisk walk, 3 times a day, 5 days a week.



See <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html>.

This page references several websites, but does not provide active links. Why do you think the writers made this choice?