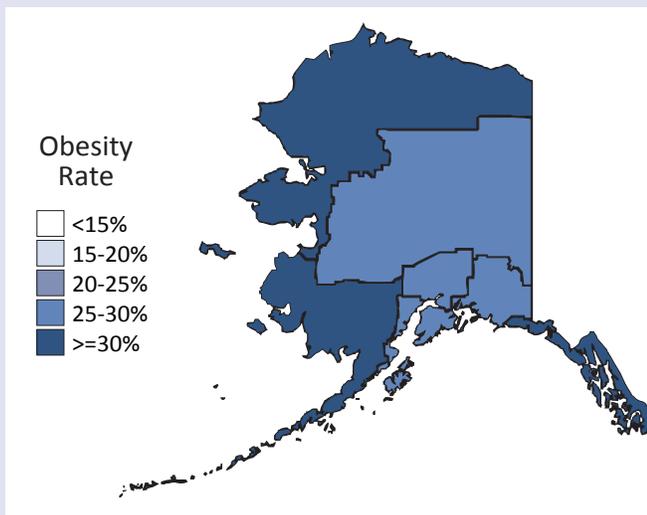


# Alaska Obesity Facts: Weight Status In Alaska

## 2 OF EVERY 3 ADULTS ARE AT RISK FOR WEIGHT-RELATED DISEASE

- Obesity-related direct medical costs in Alaska are estimated at \$459 million annually.<sup>1</sup>
- Obese youth are at risk of many of the same chronic conditions as obese adults:
  - Type 2 diabetes
  - High blood pressure and high cholesterol.<sup>2</sup>
- Overweight and obese children are likely to become obese adults.<sup>2</sup>
- Obese adults are at risk for heart disease and stroke, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, several cancers, and premature death.<sup>2</sup>
- Obese youth get worse grades, have more absences from school and face more social stigmatization and discrimination compared to their peers.<sup>2</sup>
- Life expectancy researchers state that today's younger generation will have shorter and less healthy lives than their parents for the first time in modern history due to obesity.<sup>3</sup>

## PREVALENCE OF ADULT OBESITY, BY PUBLIC HEALTH REGION OF ALASKA, 2015

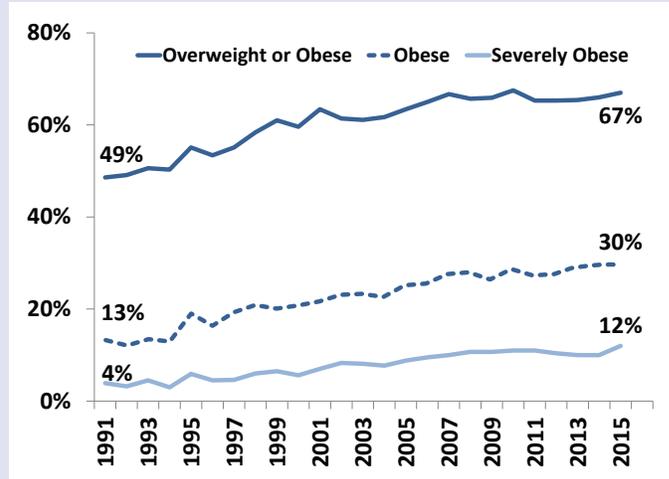


SOURCE: ALASKA BRFSS. ACCESSED THROUGH INFORMED ALASKANS AT: [HTTP://DHSS.ALASKA.GOV/DPH/INFOCENTER/PAGES/1A/DEFAULT.ASPX](http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/infocenter/pages/1a/default.aspx)

- Though some disparities in rates of obesity exist in Alaska, obesity prevalence exceeds 26% in every region of the state.

## ADULT WEIGHT STATUS

### TREND IN PREVALENCE OF OVERWEIGHT/OBESITY (BMI ≥ 25.0), OBESITY (BMI ≥ 30.0), AND SEVERE OBESITY (BMI ≥ 35.0), ALASKA ADULTS, 1991-2015



SOURCE: ALASKA BRFSS (STANDARD AND SUPPLEMENTAL SURVEYS)

- While adult obesity and overweight rates climbed steadily for nearly two decades, there has been a leveling off of these rates in Alaska adults since 2013.
- Despite the leveling off, two of every three Alaska adults are at risk for weight-related diseases. More work needs to be done to maintain the progress Alaska has made and to prevent and control obesity.

**Weight status** is classified by using height and weight to determine Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is strongly correlated with various metabolic and disease outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

For adults, weight status classifications are referenced at: [www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing).

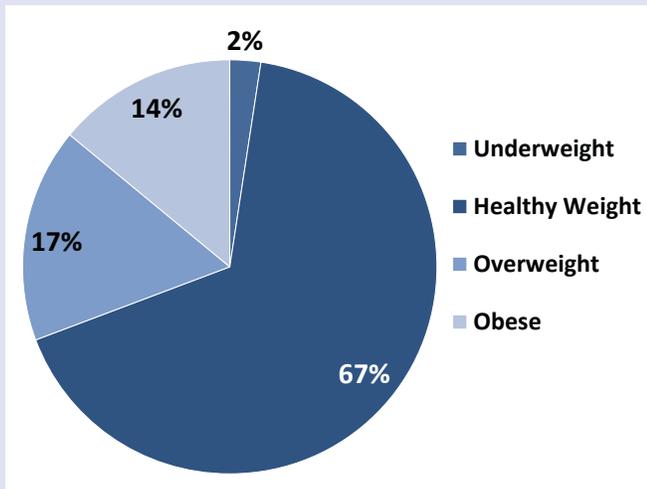
For children and adolescents, age- and sex-specific growth charts are referenced at: [nccd.cdc.gov/dnpabmi/](http://nccd.cdc.gov/dnpabmi/).

# Alaska Obesity Facts: Strategies to Reduce & Prevent Obesity

## TOO MANY CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE ABOVE A HEALTHY WEIGHT

- Based on self-reported height and weight, 31% of Alaska high school students are classified as either overweight (17%) or obese (14%)—well above the Healthy Alaskans 2020 targets of 12% for overweight and 10% for obesity.<sup>5</sup>
- Objectively measured (versus self-reported) Alaska children height and weight measures reveal an even larger problem:
  - 19% of 2-4 year old WIC participants are obese.<sup>6</sup>
  - 17% of K-8th grade students are overweight and another 18% are obese in the Anchorage and Matanuska-Susitna school districts.<sup>7</sup>

WEIGHT STATUS,  
ALASKA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, 2015



SOURCE: ALASKA YRBS.

## What Can Alaska Schools, Worksites & Communities Do?

- **Schools:** Implement strong school wellness policies that ensure availability and marketing of healthy foods and beverages; provide all children with quality physical education.<sup>8,9</sup>
- **Worksites:** Encourage active living and healthy eating at work.<sup>9</sup>
- **Communities:** Establish community coalitions to support changes that promote active and healthy living.<sup>8</sup>

## What Can Health Care Providers Do?

- Assess children's growth status at least annually.<sup>10</sup>
- Provide obesity prevention messages and suggest healthy lifestyle interventions.<sup>10</sup>

## What Can Individuals Do?

- Limit consumption of sugary drinks; eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins; choose water and low-fat or non-fat dairy products; limit television/screen time to no more than two hours per day; and be more physically active.

**ALASKANS SAY THE SOLUTION DOES NOT REST SOLELY ON THE INDIVIDUAL:** Alaska adults reported that the government (54%), the food industry (75%), schools (79%), and doctors (76%) have some or a lot of responsibility for addressing obesity. Parents (99%) and individuals (92%) also are responsible.<sup>11</sup>

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