

OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY

Body mass index (BMI) is the ratio of weight to height, which is used to define weight status. In children, BMI is used in conjunction with age and sex, since both of these factors affect body composition. Children who fall between the 85th and 94th percentile of BMI-for-age are considered overweight, while children who are in the 95th percentile or above are considered obese; those who fall below the 5th percentile are considered underweight. Those between the 5th and 84th percentile are considered to be normal weight. In 2007, 15.3 percent of children aged 10-17 years were overweight and 16.4 percent were obese based on parent-reported height and weight. Obesity is a serious health concern for

children—obese children are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and Type 2 diabetes. Obese children are also at increased risk of obesity in adulthood, which is associated with a host of serious health consequences.¹

Weight status among children varies by a number of factors including household poverty.² In 2007, 27.4 percent of children living with household incomes below 100 percent of the Federal poverty level (\$20,650 for a family of four in 2007) were obese, compared to only 10.0 percent of children living in households with incomes of 400 percent or more of the Federal poverty level.

The prevalence of obesity among children

increased sharply between 1976 and 2008. The obesity prevalence for male children nearly quadrupled from 5.5 percent in 1976-1980 to 21.0 percent in 2007-2008. For female children, the obesity prevalence tripled from 5.8 percent in 1976-1980 to 17.3 percent in 2007-2008.³

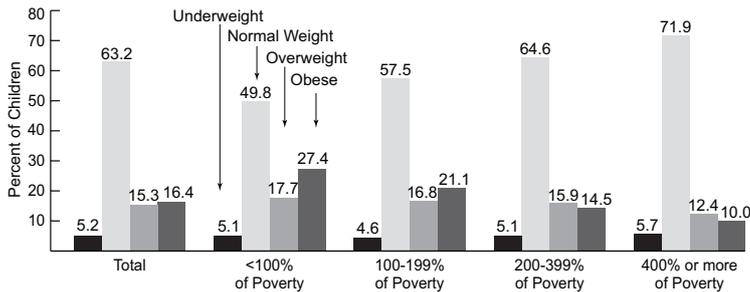
1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Childhood overweight and obesity*. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/index.html>. Accessed February 2011.

2 Gopal SK and Kogan MD. *Childhood Obesity in the United States, 1976-2008. A 75th Anniversary Publication*. Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Rockville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services; 2010.

3 Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2010*. Available at: <http://childstats.gov/americaschildren/index.asp>. Accessed June 2011.

Weight Status* Among Children Aged 10-17 Years, by Poverty,** 2007

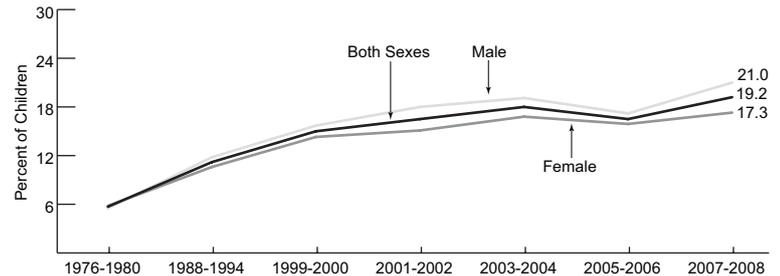
Source (II.2): Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Survey of Children's Health



*Underweight is a BMI-for-age under the 5th percentile, normal weight is a BMI-for-weight between the 5th and 84th percentile, overweight is a BMI-for-age between the 85th and 94th percentile, and obesity is a BMI-for-age in the 95th percentile or above; based on parent-reported height and weight. **The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty level for a family of four was \$20,650 in 2007.

Obesity* Among US Children Aged 6-17, by Sex, 1976-2008

Source (II.12): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey



*Obesity is a BMI-for-age in the 95th percentile or above; based on parent-reported height and weight.