OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY

Overweight and obesity are associated with an increased risk of numerous diseases and conditions, including high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, arthritis, certain types of cancer, and reproductive health risks.\(^{18}\) As a result, annual medical costs for people who are obese have been estimated to be $1,429, or 42 percent, higher than people of normal weight, aggregating to a total of $147 billion.\(^{18}\) Measurements of overweight and obesity are based on Body Mass Index (BMI), which is a ratio of weight to height. In 2009–2010, more than two-thirds of adults were overweight or obese (68.3 percent); this includes 33.0 percent who were classified as overweight (BMI of 25.0–29.9) and 35.3 percent of adults who were classified as obese (BMI of 30.0 or more; data not shown).

In 2009–2010, women were less likely than men to be overweight (28.1 versus 38.3 percent, respectively), but equally as likely to be obese (approximately 35 percent; data for men not shown). Weight status varied by age among both women and men, although the prevalence of obesity increased markedly for both sexes after age 25. Among women, obesity was most prevalent among those aged 45–64 and 65 years and older (40.5 and 38.6 percent, respectively) compared to one-third of those aged 25–44 years and one-quarter of women aged 18–24 years. While overall, less than 2 percent of adults were underweight (BMI of 18.5 or less; data not shown), 5.7 percent of women aged 18–24 years met this criteria in 2009–2010.

Obesity also varies by poverty, as well as race and ethnicity. In 2009–2010, 43.6 percent of women living in households with incomes below the poverty level were obese, compared to 30.5 percent of women with a household income of 300 percent or more of poverty. Non-Hispanic Black and Mexican American women were also significantly more likely to be obese than non-Hispanic White women (58.0 and 44.0 versus 33.1 percent, respectively; data not shown). In contrast to non-Hispanic White women, non-Hispanic Black and Mexican American women have experienced significant increases in obesity over the last decade.\(^{19}\) Higher obesity rates have also been reported among non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native women while lower rates have been reported for non-Hispanic Asian women.\(^{20}\) Community strategies that can help to prevent obesity include efforts to improve access to healthy foods, parks, and recreational facilities.\(^{21}\)

Weight Status* Among Women Aged 18 and Older, by Age, 2009–2010

Source II.9: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey

\(^{*}\)Underweight is defined as having a Body Mass Index (BMI) of less than 18.5; normal weight is defined as having a BMI between 18.5 and 24.9; overweight is defined as having a BMI between 25.0 and 29.9; obesity is defined as having a BMI of 30.0 or more.