

OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY

Overweight and obesity are associated with an increased risk of numerous diseases and conditions, including high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular and liver diseases, arthritis, certain types of cancer, and reproductive health risks.²² 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.²² Overweight and obesity are measured by Body Mass Index (BMI), which is a ratio of weight to height. In 2009–2010, the majority of women were overweight or obese (63.4 percent); this includes 27.9 percent who were classified as overweight (BMI of 25.0–29.9) and 35.5 percent who were classified as obese (BMI of 30.0 or more). Compared with women, men were equally likely to be obese but more likely to be overweight (34.6 and 38.1 percent, respectively; data not shown).

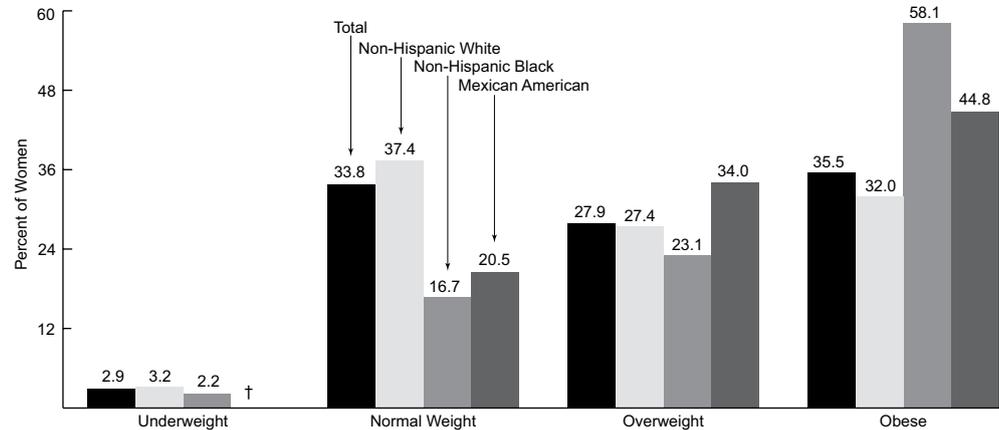
Less than 3 percent of women were underweight in 2009–2010 (BMI <18.5). With the exception of the underweight category, weight status varied greatly by race and ethnicity. About 37 percent of non-Hispanic White women were of normal weight (BMI 18.5–24.9) compared with only 16.7 percent of non-Hispanic Black women and 20.5 percent of Mexican American women. Most of this racial and ethnic variation in normal weight is explained by differences in

obesity rates. Non-Hispanic Black and Mexican American women had the highest rates of obesity (58.1 and 44.8 percent, respectively), compared with 32.0 percent of non-Hispanic White women. Obesity has increased significantly over the past decade for non-Hispanic Black and Mexican American women, contributing to widening health disparities.²³ Higher obesity rates have also been reported among American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander women, while lower rates have been reported among Asian women.²⁴

Obesity also varied by age and income. Obesity rates increased with age from 25.8 percent of women aged 18–24 years to about 40 percent of women aged 45 and older in 2009–2010. With respect to income, 45.3 percent of women living in households with incomes below the poverty level were obese, compared to 29.1 percent of women with a household income of 300 percent or more of poverty (data not shown). Community strategies that can help to prevent obesity include efforts to improve access to healthy foods and safe places for physical activity.²⁵

Women Aged 18 and Older, by Weight Status* and Race/Ethnicity,** 2009–2010

Source II.8: 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. Percentages may not add to totals due to rounding; all estimates are age-adjusted. **The sample of American Indian/Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders, and persons of multiple race was too small to produce reliable results. †Estimate did not meet the standards of reliability or precision.