

facts about: preventing obesity: the role of physical activity

New Mexico's Prevention Research Center Fact Series

Rates of obesity and overweight* are increasing in both adult and child populations throughout the United States. In New Mexico, more than half (56%) of all adults are considered obese or overweight, and the rate is rapidly increasing among children of all ages. Childhood obesity and overweight is a major public health concern, and obesity prevention is an international public health priority. We need more efforts to prevent obesity and overweight in New Mexico.

Source: Campbell, K. et al. 2000.

research shows

- New Mexicans age 15 and older who exercise regularly save \$330 a year on medical costs EACH. If all New Mexicans were physically active, over \$450 million could be saved annually in medical costs.

Source: Campbell, K. et al. 2000.

- Obesity and overweight are associated with an increased risk for heart disease (the leading cause of death), cancer (the second leading cause of death), diabetes (the 6th leading cause of death) and musculo-skeletal disorders.

Source: Congressional Findings, 2003.

- Type 2 diabetes, previously considered an adult disease, has increased dramatically in children and adolescents. Overweight and obesity are closely linked to type 2 diabetes.

- The most immediate consequence of overweight, as perceived by children themselves, is social discrimination.

Source: US Surgeon General, 2002.

strategies to address obesity

A healthy lifestyle, which includes appropriate weight control, is the best defense against developing a chronic illness.

Strategies that encourage reduction in sedentary behavior (i.e. TV watching, computer time, etc.) and increase physical activity have been shown to reduce obesity. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children's television and video time be limited to a maximum of 2 hours per day.

Sources: Gortmaker, S. et al. 1999. Krebs, N.F. & Jacobson, M.S., 2003.

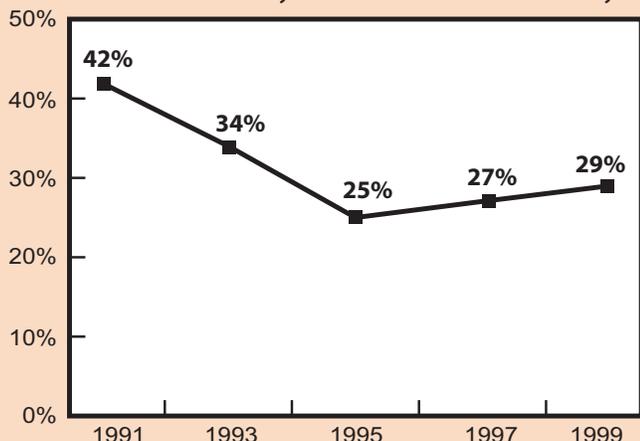
The Surgeon General provides the following strategies:

- To maintain your weight, your intake of calories must equal your energy output.
- To lose weight, you must use more energy than you take in.
- Adding moderate amounts of physical activity five or more times a week to your routine uses 150 calories of energy on each day of activity which can be equivalent to approximately 10 pounds in a year.

Source: The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity, 2001.

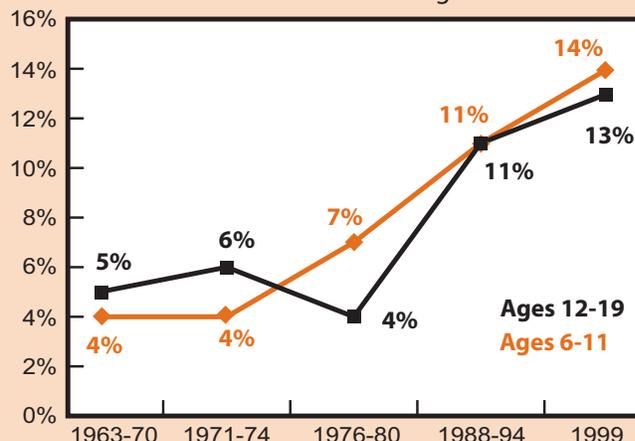
National data show how decreases in physical education classes compare to increases in overweight adolescents.

Percentage of U.S. High School Students who Attended Physical Education Classes Daily



Source: CDC, National Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Percentage of U.S. Children and Adolescents who were Overweight



Source: National Center for Health Statistics

preventing obesity: the role of physical activity

In a recent poll of New Mexicans, nearly 9 out of 10 favored requiring minimum standards for physical education in all New Mexico Public Schools.

Source: Research!America, New Mexico Residents Speak on Public Health Research. 2004



in their own words

“What scares me most is that diseases caused by lack of activity and good nutrition are beginning to maim our children.... Type 2 diabetes, a disease once reserved for adults... is now found in children as young as eight.”

– Secretary of Health & Human Services
Tommy Thompson

“A lot of parents write excuses for kids, saying, ‘Don’t send [the student] to PE because he or she doesn’t like to run.’ I see a lot of students, even in middle school, that are seriously overweight.”

– Teacher

recommendations

The Surgeon General recommends that the nation invest in research that improves our understanding of the causes, prevention, and treatment of overweight and obesity.

A concerted effort should be made to:

- Increase research on behavioral and environmental causes of overweight and obesity.
- Increase research and evaluation on prevention and treatment interventions for overweight and obesity and develop and disseminate best practices guidelines.
- Increase research on disparities in the prevalence of overweight and obesity among racial and ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, and age groups and use this research to identify effective and culturally appropriate interventions.”

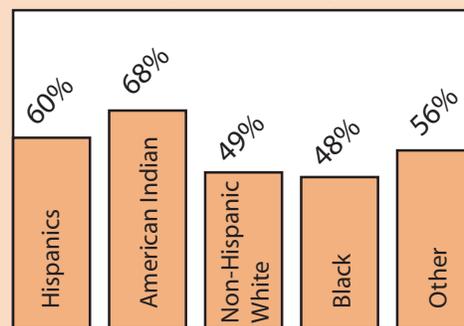
Source: The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity, 2001.

In New Mexico

- Of those New Mexicans who are overweight, 6.1% have diabetes; of those who are obese, 13% have diabetes. In contrast, only 2.8% of those who are not overweight have diabetes.
- From 1990 to 2001, NM adults of all ages have shown an increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity. The percentage of those aged 18-34 who are overweight or obese doubled from 7.1% to 15.9%.

Source: New Mexico Department of Health and U.S. Centers for Disease Control

New Mexico's Overweight/Obese Population



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation: State Health Facts Online, 2001

This fact series is being provided to you by New Mexico's Prevention Research Center*. Our goal is to translate research into improved national, state, and local public health policies and practices.

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* For a full list of sources cited in this Fact Sheet, and for definitions of overweight and obesity, see <http://hsc.unm.edu/chdp> or contact: Linda Peñaloza at L.Penaloz@salud.unm.edu



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