



Overweight & Obesity in Anoka County

Priority Health Issue: **CHILDREN AND ADULTS WHO ARE OBESE AND OVERWEIGHT** are at risk for chronic diseases caused by physical inactivity, poor nutrition, unhealthy eating habits, and other unhealthy behaviors.

The increasing rate of overweight and obesity threatens the health of children, youth, adults, and seniors, placing them at much greater risk for development and the early onset of a wide variety of chronic disease and health conditions.

The definition of overweight and obesity is determined by using a formula involving height and weight to arrive at a Body Mass Index (BMI). For children and youth, age and gender are factored into the formula.

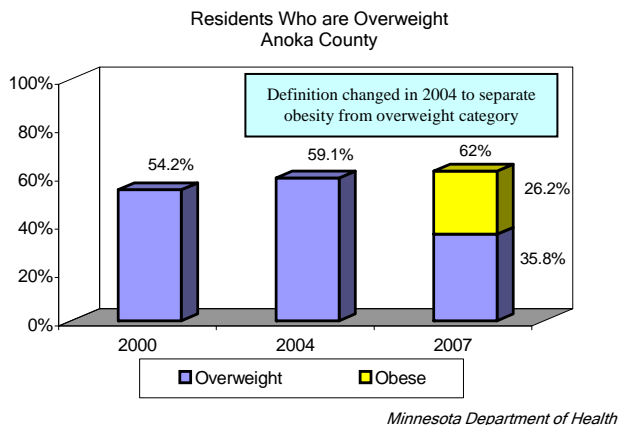
Contributing Factors

Genetics, the environment, cultural factors, socio-economic status, psychological factors and daily lifestyle decisions all play a part in weight management over a person's lifespan. Physical activity and calorie intake play a major role.

Our lifestyle has been altered by dramatic changes over time:

- Technology that reduces physical activity such as cars, computers, and television.
- Increased marketing and consumption of unhealthy food items.
- Increased food portions/serving size.
- Lack of supportive choices such as no sidewalks, unsafe neighborhoods, limited access to fruits and vegetables
- Missing policy support for school and child care nutrition, physical education standards, worksite food vending and catering policies.

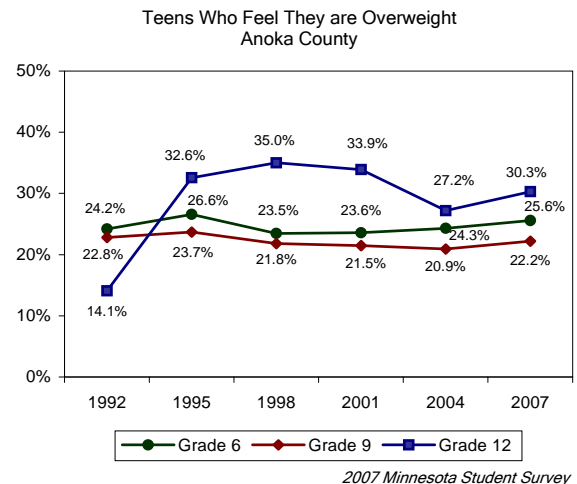
Residents



Over 60% of Anoka adult residents were estimated to be overweight or obese in 2007, according to a Minnesota Department of Health Behavior Risk telephone survey. This is comparable to the statewide estimate.

As noted in the chart above, the definition changed in 2007 to separate obesity from the overweight category.

Students



Nearly one in six 6th graders, one in five 9th graders, and one in four 12th graders reported in the 2007 Minnesota Student Survey that they feel they are overweight.

WIC Clients

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program provides nutrition education and vouchers for supplemental foods for pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women (and children, up to age five), who meet income eligibility requirements and have a nutritional risk and/or medical need.

- In February of 2009, of the 1,381 women receiving WIC vouchers, 29% had self-reported being obese before becoming pregnant.
- In that same month, 13.5% of the 2- to 5-year-olds at WIC were determined to be overweight, and another 16.4% were at-risk for being overweight.

Lifestyle Factors

- The Minnesota Department of Health Behavior Risk Telephone Survey looked at the exercise activities of residents in Anoka County over a four-year period from 2004 to 2007. A fairly consistent estimate of about 15% of the residents reportedly did not participate in any physical activity during a designated month.
- In the 2007 Student Survey, 36% of 6th graders, 43% of 9th graders, and 53% of 12th graders reported that they were physically active for 30 minutes or more on at least five days of the last seven days. This is an improvement of 4% to 10% since 2001.
- Less than 20% of 6th, 9th, and 12th graders in the same survey had five or more servings of fruits and vegetables on the previous day.

A number of surveys were conducted in Anoka County during 2007 to 2008 that asked residents about their lifestyle activities.

- From 256 respondents at the Anoka County Fair, 47% reported they were physically active for at least 30 minutes on five days or more each week.
- Only 6% of female and 3% of male respondents consumed the minimum recommended servings of fruit and vegetables on the previous day.

In three other surveys (with 173 participants), convenience and time seemed to be the major barriers to healthy eating and physical activity.

Worksites

Among the hundreds of worksites in Anoka County with 50 or more employees, there were 125 worksites where an Employee Wellness Program Assessment was completed.

- 26% of these worksites had an employee wellness program.
- 30% to 40% offered wellness information or programs, depending on the topic.
- 2% to 3% had nutrition policies for catering, vending machines, and food in cafeterias.

Economic Impact

Obesity has been shown to have a financial impact on medical costs, loss of productivity, absenteeism, and premature death.

National estimates in 2004 placed the financial burden of obesity in Minnesota at over one billion dollars.



Sources

Data for this report was derived from the following sources:

Minnesota Departments of Education, Health, Human Services, & Public Safety, "Minnesota Student Survey 1992-2007 Trends: Behaviors, Attitudes and Perceptions of Minnesota's 6th, 9th, and 12th Graders" (2007)
<http://education.state.mn.us/>

Minnesota Department of Health
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/>