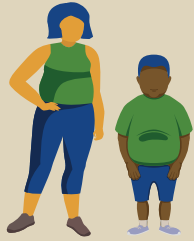


# UNFIT TO SERVE

## OBESITY

### IS IMPACTING NATIONAL SECURITY

#### THE PROBLEM



Approximately **1 in 5 children** and **2 in 5 adults** in the U.S. struggle with obesity.

Only **half of adults** and about **one quarter of youth** get recommended amounts of aerobic physical activity.

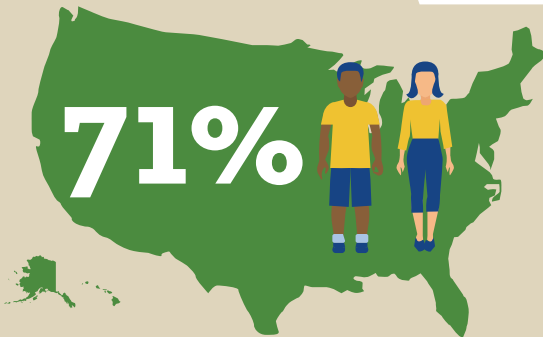


Nearly **1 in 4** young adults are too heavy to serve in our military.

*Over the last decade, we have experienced increasing difficulty in recruiting soldiers due to the decline in the health of our nation's youth. Unless we see significant change in physical activity and nutrition in America our national security will be affected.*

Mark Hertling, Lieutenant General, U.S. Army (Retired)

#### INELIGIBLE TO SERVE



**71% of young people** in the U.S. would not be able to join the military if they wanted to.

3 most common reasons young people are ineligible.



Overweight or obesity



Educational deficits

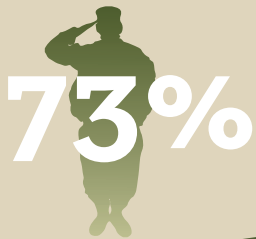


Criminal or drug abuse record

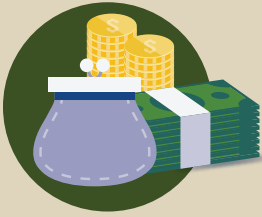
#### OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY IMPACTS MILITARY READINESS

**Overweight and obesity among active duty service members has risen 73% between 2011 and 2015**

These individuals are less likely to be medically ready to deploy. Between 2008 and 2017 active duty soldiers had more than 3.6 million musculoskeletal injuries. One study found that active duty soldiers with obesity were 33 percent more likely to get this type of injury.



## OBESITY IS COSTLY



**\$1.5  
BILLION**

The Department of Defense, our nation's largest employer, spends about **\$1.5 billion annually in obesity-related health care costs** for current and former service members and their families, as well as costs to replace unfit personnel.

Lost workdays due to overweight and obesity for active duty military personnel is **658k days per year**. This costs the Department of Defense **\$103 million per year**.

**658K  
DAYS PER YEAR**



*“In the civilian world, unfit or overweight employees can impact the bottom line. But in our line of work, lives are on the line and our national security is at stake.”*

**General Richard E. Hawley, U.S. Air Force (Retired)**

## IMPROVED NUTRITION AND INCREASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CAN BUILD A STRONG NATION

Healthy eating and physical activity can provide multiple performance and health benefits for current and future service members.

### Healthy Eating Benefits



- Improved brain function
- Delayed muscle fatigue
- Accelerated recovery from strenuous activity
- Improved overall military readiness
- Sustained health and disease prevention

### Physical Activity Benefits



- Improved aerobic and muscular fitness
- Improved balance and bone health
- Improved joint mobility
- Improved mental health
- Reduced risk of falling
- Extended years of active life

*“If we don't take steps now to build a strong, healthy foundation for our young people, then it will not just be our military that pays the price – our nation as a whole will suffer also.”*

**Richard R. Jeffries, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired) and former Medical Officer of the U.S. Marine Corps**

March 2019



**U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:**  
Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity  
[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao)

