CDC Newsroom

New CDC data finds adult obesity is increasing

Obesity worsens outcomes from COVID-19

Media Statement

For Immediate Release: Thursday, September 17, 2020
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New data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that adult obesity prevalence is increasing and racial and ethnic disparities persist. Notably, adults with obesity are at heightened risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19.

The 2019 Adult Obesity Prevalence Maps show that twelve states now have an adult obesity prevalence at or above 35%: Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia. This is up from nine states in 2018 and six states in 2017.

The maps break down adult obesity prevalence by race, ethnicity, and location based on self-reported height and weight data. Combined data from 2017-2019 show notable racial and ethnic disparities:

- 34 states and the District of Columbia had an obesity prevalence of 35% or higher among non-Hispanic Black adults.
- 15 states had an obesity prevalence of 35% or higher among Hispanic adults.
- 6 states had an obesity prevalence of 35% or higher among non-Hispanic White adults.

In addition to the maps, CDC has released a summary statement on obesity and race and ethnicity as related to COVID-19 risk.

Highlights from this summary statement:

- Obesity worsens outcomes from COVID-19, increasing the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death.
- Obesity disproportionately impacts some racial and ethnic minority groups who are also at increased risk of COVID-19.
- These disparities underscore the need to remove barriers to healthy living and ensure that communities support a healthy, active lifestyle for all.
- While system and environment changes can take time, we can take small steps now to maintain or improve our health and protect ourselves during this pandemic.
- Being active and eating a healthy diet can support optimal immune function and help prevent or manage chronic diseases that worsen outcomes from COVID-19.
- These actions, as well as getting enough sleep and finding healthy ways to cope with stress can help with weight maintenance and improve overall health.

We all have a role to play in turning the tide against obesity. Read the summary statement at: https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/obesity-and-covid-19.html.

CDC's mission includes achieving health equity by eliminating health disparities and attaining optimal health for all Americans. CDC addresses health equity through its programs, research, tools and resources, and leadership. For information on CDC's work toward reducing and eliminating health disparities to reach health equity, https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/index.html.

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