

# One in four Irish men now obese

April 4 2011

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Over the past 20 years obesity has increased more than three-fold in men and 1.7-fold in women in Ireland, according to a new national survey. Almost 26% of men are now obese, up from 8% in 1990. In women, the rate of obesity is 21%, up from 13%.

This scientific study which documents diet and lifestyle behaviour of a nationally representative sample of 1500 Irish adults was carried out by the Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance (IUNA) at University College Cork and University College Dublin. The University of Ulster, Coleraine and Teagasc Ashtown Food Research Centre also contributed to specific aspects of the survey.

According to Professor Albert Flynn, University College, Cork, the scientific data provided by this study will be widely used to develop nutrition policy for Ireland and assist in the development of programmes to tackle [obesity](#).

"We need clear guidelines for healthy eating – guidelines that focus on appropriate portion sizes, lower consumption of fat, salt and alcohol, and higher intake of vegetables and fruit, fiber, and key vitamins and minerals" he said.

Dr. Anne Nugent, UCD Institute of Food and Health, University College, Dublin said that the rise of overweight and obesity in adults must be tackled.

"Obesity is strongly related to diabetes, and is also linked with increased

risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, gall bladder disease, bone joint disorders and certain cancers. The continuing rise in overweight and obesity in this age group highlights the need to identify ways to help adults to adopt healthy eating and physical activity habits."

The research will also provide scientific knowledge that will support innovation & competitiveness in the Irish food industry. It will also ensure that the development and implementation of policy for food safety and nutrition at national and EU level is strongly evidence-based and reflects national needs.

Key findings on food consumption habits in Irish adults identified issues that need to be addressed to promote [healthy eating](#), including:

- Low intakes of fruit and vegetables with average intakes well below international recommendations
- Four out of five adults are not getting the recommended daily intake of dietary fibre
- Over 60% of adults exceed the recommended fat intake
- Daily salt intake is higher than the level recommended by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland
- More than one quarter of adults consume alcohol in excess of the maximum recommended intakes
- Many adults, particularly women, have inadequate intakes of minerals such as iron and calcium and vitamins such as vitamin D and the B-vitamin folate

Provided by University College Dublin

Citation: One in four Irish men now obese (2011, April 4) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-04-irish-men-obese.html>

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