

Malta tops EU obesity rankings, Romania thinnest

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Malta has the highest proportion of obese adults in Europe, according to EU figures released Thursday, while Romania is the least obese.

In total just under a sixth of adults living in the European Union are obese—15.9 percent, according to the Eurostat statistics agency, which said the figure goes up amongst older and less educated Europeans.

Counting 26 percent of its adults as obese, the Mediterranean island of Malta appears the worst hit by the public health problem, followed by Latvia and Hungary.

Britain—which leads the way in consuming the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, according to Eurostat figures released last week—came in fifth place with 20.1 percent.

Romania may not be doing so well on eating its greens—it came in last place on that ranking—but its rates of obesity are the lowest in Europe at 9.4 percent, ahead of Italy (10.7 percent) and the Netherlands (13.3 percent).

"With the exception of those aged 75 or over, the older the age group, the higher the share of [obese persons](#)," Eurostat said in a statement. Only 5.7 percent of 18-24 year-olds are obese, compared to 22.1 percent of 65-74 year-olds.

There is also a clear link between education and obesity, with almost a

fifth in the lowest-qualified category classed as obese compared to 11.5 percent for those with higher education.

Eurostat defines obesity as having a Body Mass Index (BMI) of more than 30, where BMI is the weight in kilograms divided by the square of a person's height in metres.

Obesity—which carries with it a range of health problems including greater risks of heart disease, diabetes and some cancers—has doubled globally since 1980, according to the World Health Organization.

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