

Adult and teen obesity rates hit all-time high, CDC reports

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New data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) indicate the adult obesity rates in the United States are now a staggering 40

percent while youth obesity rates grew to 20 percent for 12-to-19-year-olds. An all-time high, these rates and the persistent disparities across different race-ethnicity groups further elevate public health concerns about how our nation can prevent and reduce obesity. As the world's leading voluntary organization dedicated to building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke, the American Heart Association is alarmed by the growing impact record high obesity rates contribute to heart and brain health.

"The disparities in [obesity rates](#) among blacks and Hispanics, both young and old, are shocking – we can and must do better," said Nancy Brown, American Heart Association CEO. "Our nation will continue to be in the midst of this [public health](#) crisis until we drive transformative change in every community. We have the tools. We just need to employ them."

NHANES is a national data survey implemented by the CDC that combines interviews and physical examinations to measure rates of disease across the entire nation. This recent NHANES report follows other current evidence from such sources as the [State of Obesity](#) and the [National Children's Health Survey](#), that indicate although public [health](#) efforts have slowed the rate of increasing [obesity](#) in recent years, the proportion of the US population that are obese continues to slowly rise. This new record high rate of obesity demonstrates the need for redoubling efforts to prevent and reduce obesity.

"These staggering statistics are unacceptable. Every child needs and deserves the opportunity to be healthy," said Brown. "Parents and teachers are calling on their communities to ensure school standards for nutrition and physical education that enable millions of children to fuel their bodies and strengthen their hearts. It is our moral imperative to advocate for national, state and local policies that promote good nutrition and [physical activity](#) for our children."

The American Heart Association invests in research, public education and advocacy that all play a critical role in transforming communities to make each day healthier for all people living in the United States. To increase physical activity, for example, the Association works with transportation and community planners to build safer streets for people walking and biking as well as ensure kids can safely walk to school.

"We know the basics of supply and demand help people eat healthier and move more," added Eduardo Sanchez, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer for Prevention at the American Heart Association. "It will take a massive push from the food and beverage industry to increase the supply of affordable, healthy, nutritious foods and fewer sugary drinks. And it takes a tremendous effort on the part of consumers to demand healthier products and policies in their communities. We all have to do our part."

[Voices for Healthy Kids](#), a joint initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the American Heart Association, is proving such advocacy efforts pay off. The initiative focuses on harnessing the power of grassroots campaigns at the local and state level to increase access to healthy foods and safe places to be active. In less than five years, more than seventy-five communities now have new goals and standards for nutrition and physical activity in schools and child care centers due to the work of Voices for Healthy Kids. In addition, residents of these communities benefit from funding for healthy food financing more walkable communities and other evidence-based public health strategies.

Provided by American Heart Association

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