

Obesity's a larger problem in rural America

June 14 2018



(HealthDay)—City folks are leaner than their country cousins, a new U.S. study finds.

Americans in rural areas are more likely to be obese than metropolitan-area residents, according to the report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In 2016, more than one-third of rural residents were obese versus 29 percent of those in metropolitan counties, researchers found. Similar results emerged in earlier research.

Obesity is a risk factor for many chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, some cancers and arthritis.

The researchers cited regional variations, with the greatest differences in rural/urban rates seen in the South.

"One possible contributing factor is the high rate of persistent poverty in the South, which also is affected by the largest difference in poverty rate between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan county residents," wrote report lead author Elizabeth Lundeen and colleagues.

Lundeen is with the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

Understanding regional variations in [obesity rates](#) can help direct prevention efforts, health officials suggest.

For the study, researchers used survey results from more than 438,000 adults in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. The investigators zeroed in on [body mass index](#) (BMI), a measure of body fat based on height and weight. A BMI of 30 or more is considered obese.

Among country dwellers, [obesity prevalence](#) ranged from about 21 percent in Colorado to 39 percent in Louisiana.

In metropolitan counties, [obesity](#) rates ranged from 22.5 percent in Colorado to nearly 37 percent in West Virginia, the findings showed.

The [report](#) recommends increasing access to healthier foods and expanding exercise opportunities in all areas of the country, but especially in more rural regions.

Suggestions include opening schools and other public buildings after hours for recreation, and including bicycle paths, paved sidewalks, and outdoor public recreation facilities in community planning.

The findings were published in the June 15 issue of the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention outlines how to [prevent weight gain](#).

Copyright © 2018 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Obesity's a larger problem in rural America (2018, June 14) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-06-obesity-larger-problem-rural-america.html>

| |
|--|
| <p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p> |
|--|