In 22 U.S. states, more than a third of adults are now obese

September 22 2023, by Cara Murez

Obesity is on the rise across the United States. In 22 states, 35% of

adults or more were obese last year, new data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show. Just 10 years ago, there were no states that had obesity rates at or above 35%.

"Our updated maps send a clear message that additional support for obesity prevention and treatment is an urgent priority," said Dr. Karen Hacker, director of CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

The 22 states with an adult obesity prevalence at or above 35% are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

That's up from 19 states in 2021.

The CDC said the 2022 maps underscore the need to ensure that all people have access to healthy foods, safe places for physical activity and stigma-free obesity prevention and treatment programs. It also called for access to proven medications and weight-loss surgery.

"Obesity is a disease caused by many factors, including eating patterns, physical activity levels, sleep routines, genetics and certain medications," Hacker said in a CDC news release. "This means that there is no one size fits all approach. However, we know the key strategies that work include addressing the underlying social determinants of health such as access to health care, healthy and affordable food, and safe places for physical activity."

Some groups are more likely to be affected than others, the CDC data show.

Among geographic groups with enough data for comparison, the number of states with an adult [obesity](#) prevalence of 35% or higher was 38 states for Black adults; 33 states for American Indian or Alaska Natives; 14 states for white people, and no states for Asian-American adults.

Obesity increases the risk of many serious health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some cancers, as well as severe outcomes from COVID-19 and poor mental health. It also carries a lot of stigma for people at these higher weights.

The CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activities, and Obesity has a variety of strategies to help improve [health](#) and prevent chronic diseases, and to help racial and ethnic populations with the highest risk of chronic disease.

These include food service and nutrition guidelines, fruit and vegetable vouchers and produce prescriptions, safe and accessible family physical activity programs, and support for breastfeeding.

  More information: The World Health Organization has more on [obesity](#).

Citation: In 22 U.S. states, more than a third of adults are now obese (2023, September 22) retrieved 17 May 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-09-states-adults-obese.html