



Overweight and Obesity in Anoka County

In Minnesota and nationally, overweight and obese children and adults face significant health problems. Genetics, the environment, cultural factors, socio-economic status and psychological factors all play a part in weight management over the lifespan. According to the Surgeon General, significant health benefits can be obtained by including a moderate amount of physical activity on most, if not all, days of the week.

In Anoka County, the state and national prevalence data indicate:

- 2,262 children under age 6 are overweight (10% prevalence);
- 10,704 children and teens ages 6 to 19 are overweight (15% prevalence) or triple the rate compared to 1980;
- 60,935 adults ages 20 to 72 years are overweight (35% prevalence) with 49,855 of these adults (27% prevalence) considered obese;
- 241 of the children (ages 2 to 5) and participating in the Anoka County WIC program are overweight (11.54% Anoka rate compared to 13.70% Minnesota rate for May 2005); and
- 745 of the women participating in the Anoka County WIC program had pre-pregnancy weights that were overweight (49.17% Anoka rate compared to 49.81% Minnesota rate for May 2005).

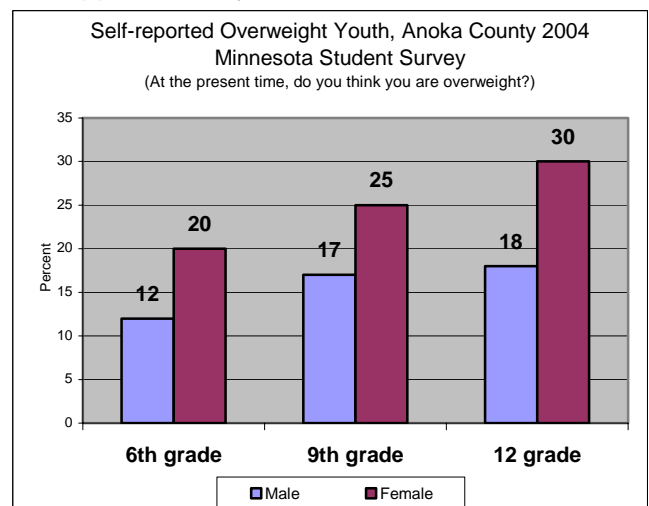
Overweight and obesity and their associated health problems have substantial economic consequences on the health care system. Research indicates that the medical costs (direct and indirect) associated with obesity are estimated to be over \$117 billion (Minnesota \$1.3 billion). Most of these costs are associated with the treatment and complications related to type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and hypertension.

Overweight refers to individuals with a Body Mass Index (BMI) between 25 and 29.9. A woman who is 5'4" and weighs 150 lbs has a BMI of 25.7.

Obesity is defined as a BMI of 30 or more. A woman who is 5'4" and weighs 175 has a BMI of 30.

Physical activity and calorie intake play major roles in weight management. Suggested community-based activities to support Anoka County residents in their efforts to maintain a healthy weight include:

- Review school lunch menus to ensure that lower calorie, high fiber food offerings and lower calorie food preparation techniques are available;
- Encourage prominent display of nutrition labeling in restaurant and take-out licensed food establishments;
- Encourage healthcare providers to educate patients and staff about the importance of physical activity and healthful food choices;
- Participate in the review of new building/commercial developments to ensure that green space, safe walking areas and pedestrian/bicycle safety are addressed;
- Encourage employers to support their work site health promotion efforts and offerings of healthy food choices for employees; and
- Work with community leaders and/or organizations to help support and promote the development of local policies and practices that support healthy behaviors.



Resources:

- Anoka County WIC Program at 763-422-7055
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/obesity/index.htm
- Minnesota Department of Health at www.health.state.mn.us