



Rising obesity rate puts more Minnesotans at risk for serious health conditions

State's adult obesity rate now tops 30%

9.12.19 Minnesota's adult obesity rate rose from 28.4% in 2017 to 30.1% in 2018, putting more Minnesotans at increased risk for heart disease, diabetes, some types of cancer and other serious health conditions.

The national adult obesity rate rose from 30.1% in 2017 to 30.9% in 2018, according to data released today by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In addition to being a significant health concern, obesity is also a significant driver of health care costs. In Minnesota, 2017 health care costs due to obesity were estimated to be \$3.2 billion.

"Obesity is more than just a health concern for individual Minnesotans – it's a major challenge for the entire state," said Minnesota Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm. "Addressing this challenge requires an individual and community-level response, including smart changes to our food and physical environments."

Commissioner Malcolm noted that while Minnesota had managed to put the brakes on rising obesity rates for several years, these efforts have been undercut by a combination of factors that includes the ongoing popularity of sugary beverages and increased time spent on computers and mobile devices.

"Sugary drinks are the largest source of added sugars in the American diet, and the added calories from sugary drinks are strongly associated with weight gain and obesity," Commissioner Malcolm said. "Also, young adults between 15 and 18 are spending more than seven and a half hours per day sitting in front of a screen – that's time they're not being active."

Minnesota's efforts like the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership and other local initiatives are working to create healthy communities that have increased access to healthy food and opportunities for physical activity in neighborhoods, schools, worksites and health care settings. SHIP also supports state initiatives to improve and expand bike and pedestrian infrastructure and national efforts to promote walking and walkable communities. SHIP is active in all 87 counties and 10 tribal nations, and communities

across the state have leveraged SHIP to make positive impacts at more than 5,250 sites across Minnesota.

In addition to SHIP, other statewide efforts include the National Diabetes Prevention Program, which supports people who have prediabetes or are at risk for type 2 diabetes, and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program, which helps eligible pregnant women, new mothers, babies and young children eat well, learn about nutrition and stay healthy.

CDC released 2018 state- and territory-specific data on adult obesity prevalence based on responses from a telephone health survey through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) uses these data to inform the public about obesity rates in the state, track changes over time and support planning of public health interventions to reduce obesity.

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Note for the media

The use of person-first language (e.g., adults with obesity) is encouraged when discussing topics like obesity and other chronic diseases, as well as respectful images. The Obesity Action Coalition has more information – please see the [Guidelines for Media Portrayals of Individuals Affected by Obesity \(PDF\)](#).

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