



Obesity Related Facts for Vermont

Obesity

- 58% of Vermont adults are overweight or obese. For adults, 23% are obese (body mass index – BMI - 30 and above) and 35% are overweight (BMI 25-29.9). Vermont ranks third among the 6 New England states in prevalence of obesity.¹
- Rates of obesity among adults in Vermont increased by 60% since 1995.²
- Rates of obesity vary by income (20% in the top-income bracket vs. 29% in the lowest) and education (from 16% to 29%). Rates of obesity and overweight are particularly pronounced when considering education (53% among college graduates to about 64% among people who only finished high school).³
- Rates of childhood obesity (≥ 95 percentile for BMI by gender and age) in Vermont increased by 42% between 1999 and 2007, from 8.3% to 11.8%. Overweight and obesity prevalence (≥ 85 percentile for BMI by gender and age) among children in VT increased by 26% over the same period.⁴
- There is variation in the prevalence of obesity among adults across Vermont counties with higher rates than state average in Essex, Franklin and Grand Isle of 27-29% and lower rates in Chittenden (18%).⁵

Health Care Costs¹

- Obesity-related medical expenditures in Vermont adults are \$183 million *each year*.⁶
- Per capita health care costs in Vermont (\$7,506) exceed the national average by 15%.⁷
- Per capita health care spending in Vermont has grown 38% faster than the national average (7.6% vs. 5.5%).⁸
- All taxpayers are affected. Public funds such as Medicare and Medicaid pay for almost a half of all adult medical expenditures in Vermont attributable to obesity (\$52 million per year by Medicaid and \$38 million by Medicare).⁹

Consumption of Sugar Sweetened Beverages

- Vermont adults drink on average 1.5 soft drinks and fruit drinks per day, summing to 45 million gallons each year – or 72.2 gallons per person, including 48.8 gallons of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs).¹⁰

¹ All cost estimates are in inflation-adjusted 2009 dollars.

- A state excise tax of one penny per ounce on SSB would decrease consumption by about 23%.¹¹ With a state excise penny-per-ounce tax on SSBs, which is approximately a 20% increase in current prices, SSB consumption in Vermont is predicted to go down in 2010 to 24.6 million gallons, or 37.6 gallons of SSB intake per capita.¹²
- Tax revenues from a penny-per-ounce tax on these beverages in Vermont over 2010-2012 would be \$96 million and over 2010-2015 would be \$195 million.¹³

Federal Food Assistance Programs

- About 17,500 Vermont children, women and infants participated in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program in 2009 receiving average monthly food benefits of \$45.4 per participant (\$3 above the national average).¹⁴
- About 11% of the population in Vermont (or 72,125 people) participated in the Food Stamp program in 2009. The number of participants increased 30% from 2008. Average monthly benefits were \$115 per participant - \$9 lower than the national average benefit.¹⁵
- Many farmers markets in Vermont accept WIC¹⁶ and food stamp (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits.¹⁷

Vermont Public Health and Advocacy Organizations

- **American Academy Pediatrics, VT chapter:** <http://www.aapvt.org/>
- **American Cancer Society in Williston VT:** <http://www.cancer.org>
- **American Diabetes Association, VT:** <http://www.diabetes.org>
- **Blue Cross Blue Shield Vermont:** <http://www.bcbsvt.com/visitor/index.html>
- **One Vermont Coalition:** <http://www.onevermont.org/index.php> (Develops and promotes fiscal policies that support the public structures Vermont requires for a vibrant and sustainable economy that offers opportunities for all citizens to live healthy, secure and productive lives.)
- **School Nutrition Association of Vermont:** <http://d/snvt.org/>
- **Vermont Action for Healthy Kids:**
http://take.actionforhealthykids.org/site/Clubs?club_id=1210&pg=main (Coalition of health and nutrition professionals and other community members who take action in schools, communities, and regions to make positive change. The Vermont Team supports healthy eating and active living through a variety of statewide resources and programs that include the Fit and Healthy School Wellness Awards.)
- **Vermont AARP:** <http://www.aarp.org/vt>
- **Vermont Dietetic Association:** <http://www.eatrightvt.org/>
- **Vermont Public Health Association:** <http://www.vtpha.org/index.shtml> (Membership organization whose purpose is to protect and promote personal, community and environmental health within our State.)
- **VT FEED (VT Farm to School Food Education Every Day):** <http://www.vtfeed.org/#> (A Farm-to-School program with a community-based approach in the rural areas of the state through a collaboration of three Vermont non-profits: Food Works at Two Rivers, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont, and Shelburne Farms.)

- **Vermont Child Health Improvement Program** at the UVM Medical School project on “Promoting Healthier Weight in Pediatrics”:
<https://www.med.uvm.edu/VCHIP/TB2+BL+CI.asp?SiteAreaID=708> (Responding to the increase in overweight and obese children in Vermont, VCHIP in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health’s Fit & Healthy Kids initiative, developed and tested the Promoting Healthier Weight in Pediatrics toolkit for pediatric primary care providers. This toolkit is designed to accurately assess whether or not children are overweight or obese and promote healthy eating, behaviors, and lifestyles resulting in the decrease of obesity among Vermont’s children, youth, and families. The toolkit is based on the 2007 Expert Committee Recommendations Regarding the Prevention, Assessment, and Treatment of Child and Adolescent Overweight and Obesity.)

Contact Information

The Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University is directed by Kelly D. Brownell, PhD and works with public policy officials and state attorneys general through Jennifer Pomeranz, JD, MPH (Director of Legal Initiatives), Roberta Friedman, ScM (Director of Public Policy), and Tania Andreyeva, PhD (Director of Economic Initiatives).

Website: www.YaleRuddCenter.org

Contact: Jennifer Pomeranz (jennifer.pomeranz@yale.edu)

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- ¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data*. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1995-2008. Available at <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss/> (accessed January 11, 2010).
- ² *Id.*
- ³ *Id.*
- ⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *YRBSS: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System*. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1999-2007 <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm> (accessed January 11, 2010).
- ⁵ Vermont Summary of BRFSS Data by County. <http://www.healthvermont.org/research/brfss/documents/CountyLevelResults2008.pdf> (accessed February 8, 2010)
- ⁶ Finkelstein E, Fiebelkorn I, Wang G. 2004. State-level estimates of annual medical expenditures attributable to obesity”. *Obesity Research* 12(1):18-24.
- ⁷ The Kaiser Family Foundation. Health Expenditure Data, Health Expenditures by State of Residence, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Office of the Actuary, National Health Statistics Group, released September 2007. Available at <http://www.statehealthfacts.org/> (accessed January 11, 2010).
- ⁸ *Id.*
- ⁹ Finkelstein E, Fiebelkorn I, Wang G. 2004. State-level estimates of annual medical expenditures attributable to obesity”. *Obesity Research* 12(1):18-24.
- ¹⁰ See National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 2003-2006. Food Frequency Module. See also, Beverage World “State of the Industry Report” (2008).
- ¹¹ Yale Rudd Center Revenue Calculator for Soft Drink Taxes. Available at <http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/sodatax.aspx> (accessed January 11, 2010).
- ¹² *Id.*
- ¹³ *Id.*
- ¹⁴ USDA Food and Nutrition Service. WIC Program. Annual state level data. Total participation and food costs. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/wicmain.htm> (accessed January 11, 2010).
- ¹⁵ USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Annual state level data. Persons participating and average monthly benefits. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/snapmain.htm> (accessed January 11, 2010).
- ¹⁶ Food and Nutrition Service, USDA Part 248—WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). A list of farmers’ markets in VT accepting WIC coupons is available at http://www.starchefs.com/features/farm_fresh/html/vermont.shtml (accessed January 11, 2010).
- ¹⁷ Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont. Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Debit Cards. Available at <http://www.nofavt.org/market-organic-food/farmers-markets/ebt> (accessed January 11, 2010).