



## Childhood Obesity in Connecticut: A Preventable Health Crisis

- Obesity<sup>1</sup> is the second-leading cause of preventable death in the United States, after smoking.<sup>2</sup>
- More than half (59%) of Connecticut adults are obese or overweight (2005-2007 data).<sup>3</sup>
- In just over one generation, U.S. rates of childhood obesity nearly tripled among preschoolers and adolescents, and quadrupled among children aged 6 to 11 years.<sup>4</sup>
- One in four (26%) Connecticut high school students are obese (12.3%) or overweight (13.3%) (2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey).<sup>5</sup> Adolescents who are overweight have an estimated 80 % chance of being obese as adults.<sup>6</sup>
- One in eight (12%) Connecticut children ages 10-17 are obese, according to a 2003-2004 survey of parents.<sup>7</sup>
- Among low-income children ages 2-5 in Connecticut, 16% are obese (2006 data).<sup>8</sup>
- Overweight children are at risk for serious physical, social and mental health problems, both during their youth and as adults: including Type 2 diabetes, asthma, cardiovascular disease, shortened life expectancy, behavioral problems, depression and poor self-esteem.<sup>9</sup>
- Unhealthy food choices and eating behaviors are major factors contributing to overweight and obesity.<sup>10</sup> Only one in five Connecticut high school students (21.5%) eats the recommended 5 or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables (2007 survey).<sup>11</sup>
- Today's youth are considered the most inactive generation in history, according to the American Obesity Association.<sup>12</sup> Most Connecticut high school students (55%) did not meet the recommended physical activity level (2007 survey).<sup>13</sup>
- One in five (20%) Connecticut adults are physically inactive, meaning no physical activity or exercise in the previous 30 days outside of a regular job (2005-2007 data).<sup>14</sup>
- In one year, obesity-related health problems in Connecticut added \$856 million in adult medical expenditures, including \$665 million in Medicaid and Medicare costs.<sup>15</sup>

*January 29, 2009*

See reverse side for endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The June 2007 Expert Committee Recommendations on the Assessment, Prevention & Treatment of Child and Adolescent Overweight and Obesity (AMA, HRSA & CDC), define *overweight* as a body mass index (BMI)  $\geq$  85th percentile but  $<$  95th percentile for age and sex, replacing the term “at risk of overweight” for individuals aged 2-18 years; BMI  $\geq$  95th percentile is considered *obese* for this population. In most children, such BMI values are known to correlate with elevated body fat, the presence or risk of obesity-related disease, and long-term mortality. Downloaded from [http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/ped\\_obesity\\_recs.pdf](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/ped_obesity_recs.pdf) (Jan. 28, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Wee, CC, et al. (2005). Health care expenditures associated with overweight and obesity among US adults: Importance of age & race. *American Journal of Public Health* 95:159-165.

<sup>3</sup> Trust for America’s Health. *F as in fat: 2008*, 10-11. (2008, Aug.). Downloaded from <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/081908.3424.fasinfat.pdf> (Jan. 28, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Institute of Medicine (2006). *Progress in Preventing Childhood Obesity: How Do We Measure Up?* Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

<sup>5</sup> Connecticut Department of Public Health (2008). 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results. Downloaded from [http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/hisr/pdf/yrebs2007ct\\_summary\\_tables.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/hisr/pdf/yrebs2007ct_summary_tables.pdf) (Jan. 28, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics. Reported in Connecticut Department of Public Health. (2007). Childhood obesity in Connecticut. Downloaded from [http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/ChOb\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Fall07.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/ChOb_Fact_Sheet_Fall07.pdf) (Jan. 28, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> National Survey of Children’s Health, 2003-2004. Reported in Trust for America’s Health. *F as in fat: 2008*, 10-11. (2008, Aug.). Downloaded from <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/081908.3424.fasinfat.pdf> (Jan. 28, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> 2006 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance Survey. Reported in Trust for America’s Health. *F as in fat: 2008*, 10-11. (2008, Aug.). Downloaded from <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/081908.3424.fasinfat.pdf> (Jan. 28, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Connecticut Department of Public Health. (2007). Childhood obesity in Connecticut. Downloaded from [http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/ChOb\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Fall07.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/ChOb_Fact_Sheet_Fall07.pdf) (Jan. 28, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Connecticut Department of Public Health. (2007). Childhood obesity in Connecticut. Downloaded from [http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/ChOb\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Fall07.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/ChOb_Fact_Sheet_Fall07.pdf) (Jan. 28, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Connecticut Department of Public Health (2008). 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results. Downloaded from [http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/hisr/pdf/yrebs2007ct\\_summary\\_tables.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/hisr/pdf/yrebs2007ct_summary_tables.pdf) (Jan. 28, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Connecticut Department of Public Health. (2007). Childhood obesity in Connecticut. Downloaded from [http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/ChOb\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Fall07.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/ChOb_Fact_Sheet_Fall07.pdf) (Jan. 28, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Reported in Trust for America’s Health. *F as in fat: 2008*, 10-11. (2008, Aug.). Downloaded from <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/081908.3424.fasinfat.pdf> (Jan. 28, 2009).

<sup>14</sup> Trust for America’s Health. *F as in fat: 2008*, 10-11. (2008, Aug.). Downloaded from <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/081908.3424.fasinfat.pdf> (Jan. 28, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> Finkelstein, EA, et al. (2004). State-level estimates of annual medical expenditures attributable to obesity. *Obesity Research* 12:18-24. Downloaded from <http://www.muni.org/iceimages/healthchp/Annual%20medical%20expenditures.pdf> (Jan. 28, 2009).