

*PHAN*

## **Topic: Nutrition and Physical Activity**

Fact Sheet

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### *Addressing the obesity epidemic in Nebraska through improved nutrition and physical activity*

## **Weighty Issues**

Obesity is increasing at epidemic proportions in Nebraska. There has been an 83 percent increase between 1990 and 2000. Nearly 3 in 5 Nebraska adults (59%) reported being either overweight or obese in 2000. When compared to other U.S. states, only 19 states rank worse than Nebraska in their percentage of obese adults.

- Approximately 1,900 deaths per year in Nebraska are currently associated with being overweight or obese.
- Approximately 9,534 Nebraskans died from cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer in 2000. Over 2740 lives in Nebraska could have been saved through proper diet and physical activity in 2000.
- Obesity is a major cause of cardiovascular disease and diabetes and is also associated with an increased risk of premature death, hypertension, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, asthma, breathing problems, high blood cholesterol, complications of pregnancy, menstrual irregularities, hirsutism, stress incontinence, increased surgical risk, psychological disorders such as depression, and psychological difficulties due to social stigmatization.

Compared to all other racial and ethnic groups, African Americans and Native Americans have the highest percentage of self-reported obesity and diabetes in Nebraska. African Americans and Native Americans are also more likely than all other racial and ethnic groups to die from heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and cancer.

Research has shown that breastfed babies have a lower risk of overweight. In addition, some recent findings suggest that breastfeeding may reduce the risk of Diabetes.

In Nebraska, the costs associated with these conditions are astounding:

- \$2.1 billion for Cardiovascular Disease in 2002
- \$972 million for Cancer in 2001
- \$610 million per year for Diabetes
- \$741 million in 2000 attributable to obesity

## Nutrition

When eating out:

- Eat a light snack, such as fruit or vegetables, before you go to take the edge off your hunger.
- Go light on alcohol and drink plenty of water with your meal.
- Start with a vegetable soup or fresh salad instead of a fried appetizer.
- Order an appetizer as an entrée.
- Ask for dressing, sauces, and toppings to be served on the side.
- Divide a dessert (or two) between everyone at the table.

Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.

- Try fresh fruits and vegetables like a banana, crisp apple, and baby carrots.
- Keep frozen fruits and vegetables in the freezer for special desserts or toppings on cereal, pancakes, and waffles.
- Choose dried fruits like apricots, cherries, blueberries, and raisins.
- Try canned fruit packed in juice and canned vegetables.
- 100% fruit and vegetable juices are a good choice.

In 2000, only 1 in 5 Nebraska adults reported consuming five or more servings of fruits and/or vegetables per day. When compared to other U.S. states, only 8 ranked worse than Nebraska in their percentage of adults who reported *not* consuming five or more servings of fruits and/or vegetables per day.

## Physical Activity

Get moving (exercise more):

- Turn off the TV or move it to a less prominent location.
- Exercise as a family by taking walks, riding bikes, or playing a sport.
- Designate certain days of the week as TV-free days.
- Walk a little more each day.
- Become an advocate of sidewalks, trails, and pedestrian concerns.
- Get a total of 30 minutes of physical activity per day. This activity does not have to be done all at once. It can be done in intervals of 10 minutes if that accommodates your schedule.

## Physical Activity Levels

*Among adults*

“Physical inactivity”-not engaging in any leisure time physical activity during the past 30 days.

“Sedentary”-no physical activity or physical activity totaling less than 20 minutes three times per week.

“Regular and sustained physical activity”-performing any physical activity or pair of activities for 30 minutes or more per session, five or more times per week, regardless of intensity.

“Regular and vigorous physical activity”-any physical activity or pair of activities that requires regular rhythmic contraction of large muscle groups at 50 percent or more of functional capacity for 20 or more minutes three or more times per week.

#### *Among youth*

“Moderate physical activity”-any physical activity (such as fast walking, slow bicycling, skating, pushing a lawn mower or mopping floors) that does not make one sweat or breath hard on five or more days per week at 30 minutes or more per day.

In 2001, seven in ten (72.3%) Nebraska high school students reported *not* engaging in even moderate levels of physical activity.

### **Body Mass Index**

Units of body mass index (BMI) quantify overweight and obesity in both adult and child populations. The BMI, which is strongly correlated with body fat, quantifies excess weight adjusted for height. BMI is calculated by dividing an individual's weight in kilograms by their height in meters squared ( $k/m^2$ ).

Among adults, weight classifications are:

- healthy = BMI of <25
- overweight = BMI that is  $\geq 25$  but < 30
- obese = BMI of  $\geq 30$

Among youth, weight classifications are based on age and gender-specific BMI. These values are derived from the 1963 National Health Examination Survey. They are:

- healthy = BMI of <80 percentile
- at risk for overweight = BMI  $\geq 85$ th percentile but <95th percentile
- overweight = a BMI of  $\geq 95$ th percentile

### **Resources**

American Diabetes Association. <http://www.diabetes.org>.

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<insert PHAN or Local Health Department info>