



May 2014

# Rates of overweight, obesity rising in Greater Cincinnati

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), obesity is a major risk factor for certain types of cancer and preventable diseases such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. Besides the negative health outcomes, being obese is costly to the public health system, especially Medicare and Medicaid. According to projections, Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio spent more than \$12 billion on health costs related to obesity in 2013.<sup>1</sup>

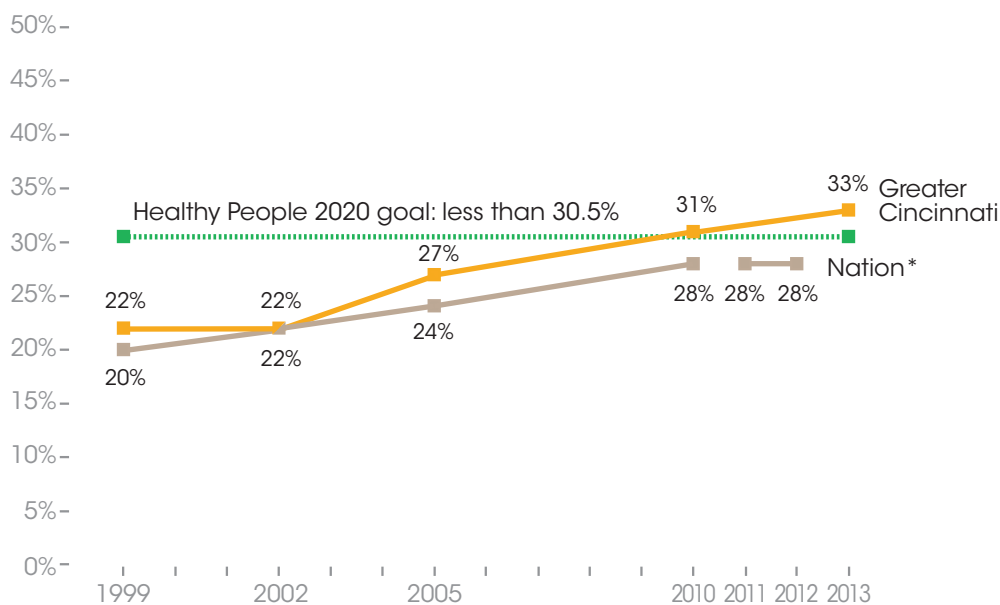
Weight ranges for being overweight and obese are calculated using the Body Mass Index (BMI)<sup>2</sup>. Based on BMI, a person who is 5 feet 4 inches tall would be considered overweight at 150 pounds and obese at 180 pounds. Similarly, a person who is 6 feet tall would be considered overweight at 190 pounds and obese at 220 pounds. By 2020, if Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio each reduce their average BMI by 5% then

<sup>1</sup> United Health Foundation, American Public Health Association, and Partnership for Prevention. The Future Costs of Obesity: National and State Estimates of the Impact of Obesity on Direct Health Care Expenses. November 2009. Available at: [www.nccor.org/downloads/CostofObesityReport-FINAL.pdf](http://www.nccor.org/downloads/CostofObesityReport-FINAL.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> BMI is calculated by dividing a person's weight in pounds by their height in inches squared, and then multiplying that result by 703. The CHSS asked for height and weight during the survey, and BMI was calculated for each respondent. Overweight is defined as a BMI of 25-29.9. Obesity is defined as a BMI of 30 or greater.

The Greater Cincinnati Community Health Status Survey (CHSS) is a project of Interact for Health. The CHSS is conducted by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. A total of 4,929 randomly selected adults residing in 8 Ohio counties, 9 Kentucky counties, and 5 Indiana counties were interviewed by telephone between Aug. 20, 2013, and Jan. 19, 2014. This included 4,324 landline interviews and 605 cell phone interviews. The potential sampling error for the survey is ±1.5%. For more information, including other topics and the list of community partners, please visit our web site at [www.interactforhealth.org/greater-cincinnati-community-health-status-survey](http://www.interactforhealth.org/greater-cincinnati-community-health-status-survey). For the complete survey dataset, visit [www.oasisdataarchive.org](http://www.oasisdataarchive.org). If you have further questions, email Jennifer Chubinski at [jchubinski@interactforhealth.org](mailto:jchubinski@interactforhealth.org).

### Rate of obesity (BMI ≥ 30) in Greater Cincinnati and the nation



\* National data are from the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). BRFSS has changed the way its data are weighted. Data 2011-present should not be directly compared to data before 2011. National data were available only up to 2012.

about 875,000 fewer people would have diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and hypertension.<sup>3</sup>

### Greater Cincinnati more obese than nation

Similar to the national trend, local overweight and obesity rates have climbed in the last 15 years. More

<sup>3</sup> Trust for America's Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future 2012. September 2012. Available at: <http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/TFAH-2012FasInFatFnlRv.pdf>.

than 6 in 10 adults (65%) in the Greater Cincinnati region are overweight or obese, compared with 6 in 10 adults (63%) in the nation.<sup>4</sup> Though the overall rates are comparable, the obesity rate is higher in Greater Cincinnati. In 2002, the obesity rate in the region was similar to the nation (2 in 10 adults). The

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<sup>4</sup> National data are from the 1999, 2002, 2005, 2010, 2011 and 2012 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, available at [www.cdc.gov/brfss/](http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/).

rate has increased since then. More than 3 in 10 adults (33%) in Greater Cincinnati were obese in 2013. Nationally, fewer than 3 in 10 adults (28%) were obese in 2012. The national rate is within the Healthy People 2020 goal of 30.5%, but the regional percentage exceeds that goal.

## Obesity associated with poor health

In Greater Cincinnati, nearly 8 in 10 adults (76%) with poor health are overweight or obese, while 6 in 10 adults (56%) with excellent or very good health are overweight or obese. A person with poor health is more likely to be obese than overweight. Out of every 10 adults with poor health in our region, five are obese and three are overweight. But among 10 adults with excellent or very good health, only two are obese and four are overweight. Because obesity is a major risk factor for various diseases, this illustrates its crucial role in influencing overall health.

## Race influences obesity

Obesity is not evenly distributed across all groups in Greater Cincinnati. African Americans have higher overweight and obesity rates than Whites. Almost 8 in 10 African Americans (76%) are overweight or obese, compared with 6 in 10 Whites (64%). Unlike other races, African Americans are also more likely to be obese than overweight. Out of every 10 African American adults in our region, four are obese and three are overweight. Among every 10 White people, only three are obese and three are overweight.

## Obesity rates differ based on income, age

Adults living below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)<sup>5</sup> are more obese (38%) than adults living above 200% FPL (31%). With respect

## Overweight and obesity in Greater Cincinnati

### By health status



### By race



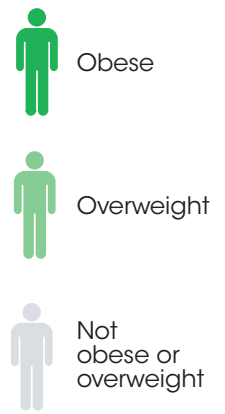
### By income



### By age



### Key



to age, younger adults between the ages of 18 and 29 are less obese (19%) than adults older than 65 (30%), while adults between the ages of 30 and 64<sup>6</sup> are most obese (39%).

<sup>6</sup> 38% of adults between the ages of 30 and 45 are obese, while 39.4% of adults between the ages of 46 and 64 are obese

<sup>5</sup> In 2013, 200% FPL was \$47,100 for a family of four.