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. Researchers estimated that in 2000, Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio spent a total of over $3 billion dollars on health costs related to obesity.[1]

Weight ranges for being overweight and obese are calculated using the Body Mass Index (BMI).[2] Based on BMI, a person who is 5'4" would be considered overweight at 150 pounds and obese at 180 pounds. Similarly, a person who is 6'0" would be considered overweight at 190 pounds and obese at 220 pounds.
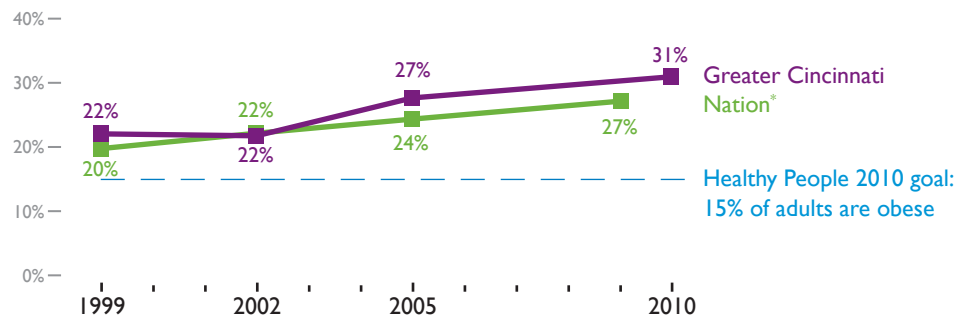
2 in 3 Cincinnati Adults Are Overweight or Obese

Almost 2 out of every 3 adults in Greater Cincinnati (64%) are

Adults in Greater Cincinnati and the nation who are obese (BMI≥30)

* National data are from the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) from 1999, 2002, 2005, and 2009, the most recent year for which data are available.

overweight (33%) or obese (31%). This compares to 63% of the nation (36% overweight and 27% obese).[3] Like the nation, local overweight and obesity rates have climbed in the last decade. Regionally, the rate has gone from 56% overweight or obese in 1999 to 64% in 2010.

1 in 3 Cincinnati Adults Are Obese

Most of the increase in the national and regional rates of people who are overweight or obese has been driven by an increase in the percentage of people who are obese (BMI≥30). In the U.S., the percentage of adults who are obese climbed from 20% in 1999 to 27% in 2009. In the Greater Cincinnati region, 22% of adults were obese

in 1999 compared to 31% in 2010. These both far exceed the Healthy People 2010 goal of 15% of adults obese.[4]

Highest Increases in the Most Obese Adults

The rate of adults in our region who are severely or very severely obese has nearly doubled since 1999, going from 8% in 1999 to 14% in 2010. These are adults with BMIs of 35.0 or greater. In order to have a BMI this high, a 5'4" adult would have to weigh more than 205 pounds and a 6'0" adult over 255 pounds.

[1] Finkelstein, EA; Fiebelkorn, IC; Wang, G. State-level estimates of annual medical expenditures attributable to obesity. Obesity Research 2004; 12(1): 18-24.

[2] 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 GCCHSS 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 over 30.0.

[3] National data are from the 1999, 2002, 2005, and 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, available at www.cdc.gov/brfss/.

[4] The Healthy People 2020 goal for the percentage of obese Americans was increased to 31%. For more information about Healthy People 2010 and 2020, please visit www.healthypeople.gov.