



# Overweight and Obesity

## **The percent of Americans—both children and adults— who are overweight or obese is staggering.**

Roughly two-thirds of adults are overweight and 36% are obese.<sup>1</sup> Among children between the ages of 2 and 19, 32% — nearly one-third — are overweight.<sup>2</sup> Huge disparities exist by race: 39% of African-American and Hispanic youth are overweight compared with 28% of white youth.<sup>2</sup> These disparities persist into adulthood, with rates of overweight exceeding 76% for African-American and Hispanic adults compared with 68% for white adults.<sup>1</sup>

## **Obesity is linked to serious health consequences.**

Adult overweight and obesity are linked to an extensive array of medical conditions including heart disease; type 2 diabetes; endometrial, breast, and colon cancers; hypertension; dyslipidemia (high amount of fat in the blood); stroke; liver and gallbladder disease; sleep apnea and respiratory problems; osteoarthritis; and gynecological problems including infertility.<sup>3</sup> Among youth, overweight and obesity can lead to the development of risk factors for heart disease, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and fatty liver.<sup>4</sup> One study found that 51% of overweight youth and 70% of obese youth had at least one risk factor for heart disease.<sup>5</sup> Overweight and obesity may also cause prediabetes, sleep apnea, and depression in youth.<sup>6,7</sup>

## **Obesity has serious economic consequences.**

Conditions caused by adult overweight and obesity cost as much as \$209.7 billion annually and comprise 20.6% of total U.S. medical expenditures.<sup>8</sup> Averting continued increases in overweight and obesity would result in a combined savings of \$549.5 billion over the next 2 decades.<sup>9</sup> In California, adult overweight and obesity cost the state \$21 billion annually in lost productivity and health care.<sup>10</sup>

## **Sugar-sweetened beverage\* consumption has been a huge contributor to the obesity epidemic.**

All lines of scientific evidence indicate a strong link between sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and obesity.<sup>11</sup> Sugar-sweetened beverages alone were responsible for 43% percent of the increase in daily calories consumed by Americans between 1977 and 2001.<sup>11</sup> Sugar calories that come in liquid form are considerably less satiating than those in solid form.<sup>12</sup> Individuals do not adequately compensate for drinking liquid calories by eating less, which leads to excess energy intake and weight gain.<sup>12</sup> Adults who drink a soda or more daily are 27% more likely to be overweight or obese, regardless of income or ethnicity.<sup>13</sup> Compared to children who rarely drink sugar-sweetened beverages, children who drink at least one serving of sugar-sweetened beverages per day have 55% increased odds of being overweight or obese.<sup>14</sup>

*\* NOTE: Sugar-sweetened beverages refers to all beverages with added sugars including carbonated soft drinks, juice drinks, sports drinks, flavored and enhanced waters, sweetened teas and energy drinks.*



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LAST UPDATED: JULY 1, 2013

