

# BREAKING DOWN THE DATA ON Obesity

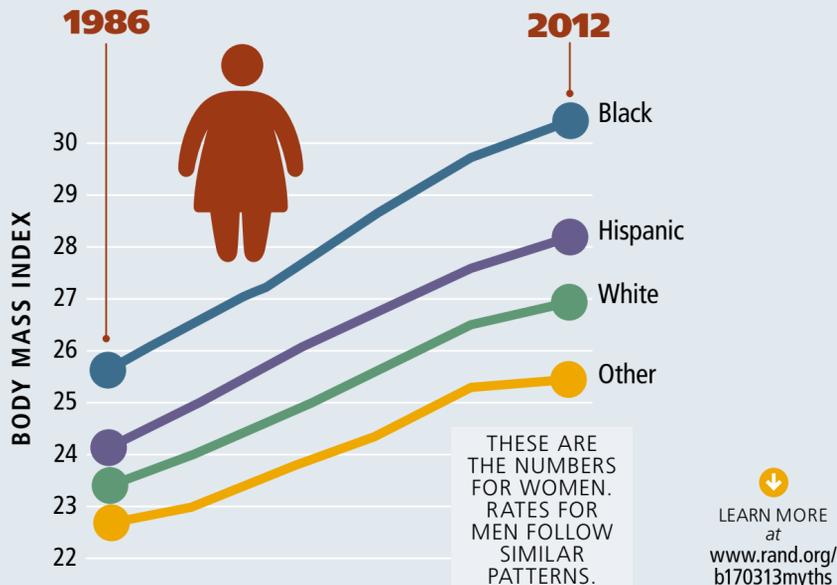
Obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. The forces at work to expand our waistlines include the marketing efforts of grocery chains and their placement of high-calorie products in store aisles, our friends' junk-food preferences, and nutritional messages from our parents.

**RAND Health leads comprehensive research efforts to better understand all sides of this epidemic:**

- demographic trends
- societal influences
- promising solutions

## Over the past several decades, obesity numbers have soared.

And although numbers vary among groups, **all sociodemographic groups have followed nearly identical upward trends.**



## Investing in our neighborhoods may help.

**But the relationship between investments and health may be nuanced.**

After a full-service supermarket opened, residents' satisfaction with the neighborhood and diet improved, but not because residents were shopping in the new store.

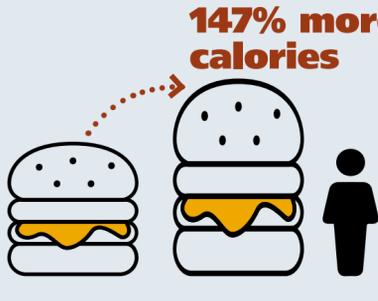


LEARN MORE at [www.rand.org/phresh-pubs](http://www.rand.org/phresh-pubs)

## Portion sizes are too big.

Portions of à la carte items offered on kids' menus **averaged 147% more calories than portions recommended by health experts.**

Hundreds of menu items are more than **600 calories each**—the maximum number of calories recommended for an entire children's meal.



LEARN MORE at [www.rand.org/t/EP66764](http://www.rand.org/t/EP66764)

## Supermarkets have room to improve.

**37%** of the food first seen when entering supermarkets is considered unhealthy (e.g., empty calories).

**Unhealthy food is placed in prominent positions**



LEARN MORE at [www.rand.org/t/EP67100](http://www.rand.org/t/EP67100)

## It's no surprise that children follow their parents' lead ...



Children of parents who drink more sugary drinks **consumed nearly 2x** more sugary drinks than kids of parents who consumed few or had negative attitudes to sugar-sweetened beverages.

LEARN MORE at [www.rand.org/t/EP67040](http://www.rand.org/t/EP67040)

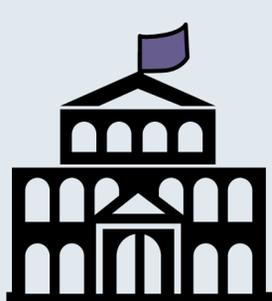
## ... and teens follow their friends' lead.

In the two public schools studied, teen junk-food intake was predicted by their friends' intake.



LEARN MORE at [www.rand.org/t/EP51538](http://www.rand.org/t/EP51538)

## But there's hope.



**State and school policies have had some positive effects.**

The odds of school children being obese were reduced by **22%–48%** in states that had strong policies regulating foods and beverages available outside of the federal school meal programs (e.g., foods sold at fundraisers).

LEARN MORE at [www.rand.org/t/EP67082](http://www.rand.org/t/EP67082)



[www.rand.org/health](http://www.rand.org/health)

BROWSE ALL RAND RESEARCH ON OBESITY at [www.rand.org/obesity](http://www.rand.org/obesity)

Excerpted from the following: Sturm, R., & An, R. (2014). Obesity and economic environments. *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, 64(5), 337-350; Dubowitz, T., et al. (2015). Diet and perceptions change with supermarket introduction in a food desert, but not because of supermarket use. *Health Affairs*, 34(11), 1858-1868; Cohen, D. A., et al. (2016). Kid's menu portion sizes: How much should children be served? *Nutrition Today*, 51(6), 273-280; Vaughan, C. A., Collins, R., Ghosh-Dastidar, M., Beckman, R., & Dubowitz, T. (2017). Does where you shop or who you are predict what you eat? The role of stores and individual characteristics in dietary intake. *Preventive Medicine*, 100, 10-16; Bogart, L. M., et al. (2017). Home sweet home: Parent and home environmental factors in adolescent consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. *Academic Pediatrics*, 17(5), 529-536; Haye, K., et al. (2013). Adolescents' intake of junk food: Processes and mechanisms driving consumption similarities among friends. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 23(3), 524-536; Datar, A., and Nicosia, N. (2017). The effect of state competitive food and beverage regulations on childhood overweight and obesity. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 60(5), 520-527.

To view this infographic online, visit [www.rand.org/t/IG136](http://www.rand.org/t/IG136).

The RAND Corporation is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous. RAND is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and committed to the public interest.