

# Childhood Obesity Facts

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## Prevalence of Childhood Obesity in the United States, 2011-2014

Childhood obesity is a serious problem in the United States putting kids at risk for poor health. Despite recent declines in the prevalence among preschool-aged children, obesity amongst all children is still too high.

In 2011-2014 For children and adolescents aged 2-19 years<sup>1</sup>:

- The prevalence of obesity has remained fairly stable at about 17% and affects about 12.7 million children and adolescents.
- The prevalence of obesity was higher among Hispanics (21.9%) and non-Hispanic blacks (19.5%) than among non-Hispanic whites (14.7%).
- The prevalence of obesity was lower in non-Hispanic Asian youth (8.6%) than in youth who were non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, or Hispanic.
- The prevalence of obesity was 8.9% among 2- to 5-year-olds compared with 17.5% of 6- to 11-year-olds and 20.5% of 12- to 19-year-olds. Childhood obesity is also more common among certain populations.

<sup>1</sup>Read [CDC National Center for Health Statistics \(NCHS\) data brief](#) [PDF-705KB]

The prevalence of obesity among children aged 2 to 5 years decreased significantly from 13.9% in 2003-2004 to 9.4% in 2013-2014.<sup>2</sup>

**Note:** In children and adolescents age 2 to 19 years, obesity was defined as a body mass index (BMI) at or above the 95th percentile of the sex-specific [CDC BMI-for-age growth charts](#).

<sup>1</sup>[Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Fryar CD, Flegal KM. Prevalence of obesity among adults and youth: United States, 2011–2014. NCHS data brief, no 219. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2015.](#)

<sup>2</sup>[Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Lawman HG, Fryar CD, Kruszon-Moran D, Kit BK, et al. Trends in Obesity Prevalence Among Children and Adolescents in the United States, 1988-1994 Through 2013-2014. \*Jama\* 2016;315\(21\):2292-9.](#)

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## Prevalence of Childhood Obesity among Young Low-Income WIC Children in the United States, 2014

Obesity disproportionately affects children from low-income families. Through a collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture, CDC uses data from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Participants and Program Characteristics (WIC PC) to replace data from the Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS) for obesity surveillance on the prevalence of obesity among young children aged 2 to 4 years from low-income families. [Read the [MMWR report](#)]

- In 2014, 14.5% of the WIC participants aged 2 to 4 years of age had obesity.
- The prevalence of obesity among young low-income children varied by WIC State Agency ranging from 8.2% in Utah to 20% in Virginia.
- The prevalence of obesity was higher among Hispanic (17.3%) and American Indian/Alaska Native (18.0%) young children than among those who were non-Hispanic white (12.2%), non-Hispanic black (11.9%), or Asians/Pacific Islander (11.1%).

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## Trends of Childhood Obesity among Young Low-Income WIC Children in the United States, 2000-2014

During 2000–2010, the overall prevalence of obesity among young low-income children in WIC increased significantly, from 14.0% in 2000 to 15.5% in 2004 and to 15.9% in 2010; during 2010–2014, the overall prevalence decreased significantly to 14.5%. [Read the [MMWR report](#)]

- Among non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians/Alaska Natives, the prevalence of obesity among young low-income children increased significantly during 2000–2004, then decreased significantly during 2010–

2014. Among Asians/Pacific Islanders, the prevalence decreased significantly during 2000–2010.

- Among the 54 WIC State Agencies in states and U.S. territories with data for 2000 and 2004, the prevalence of obesity increased in 48 (89%); among these increases, 38 (70%) were statistically significant.
- Among the 54 WIC State Agencies with data for 2004 and 2010, the prevalence of obesity increased in 26 (48%), including 17 (31%) that were statistically significant; the prevalence decreased in 27 (37%) State Agencies, including 20 (74%) that were statistically significant.
- Among the 56 WIC State Agencies with data for 2010 and 2014, only 9 (16%) experienced an increase in obesity prevalence, including 4 (7%) in which the increase was statistically significant. The prevalence of obesity decreased in 45 (80%) State Agencies, including 34 (61%) in which the difference was statistically significant.