

MY HEALTH, MY RESPONSIBILITY, OUR COMMUNITY

State of Community Health Report

on

Overweight, Obesity, Diet, and Exercise

This is the ninth in a series of monthly reports from the

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Health Council

Viston Taylor, Chairman

William Hicks, Vice Chairman

November 2000

The Regional Health Council is a community-based organization designated by the Tennessee Department of Health to be responsible for community health assessment, regional health planning, and providing input on funding decisions for health and health-related initiatives. Council members are appointed by the County Executive and the Hamilton County Commission.

The Council identified and prioritized the key health issues facing the community and is developing targeted strategies to address each issue. The five key preventable health issues are: obesity, poor diet and lack of exercise; tobacco use; risky sexual behavior; alcohol and drug use; and lack of involvement in health screenings and other preventive measures.

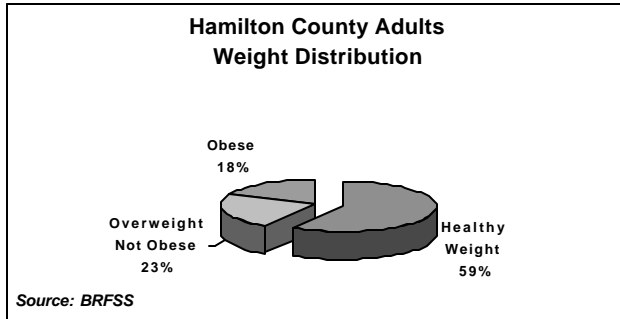
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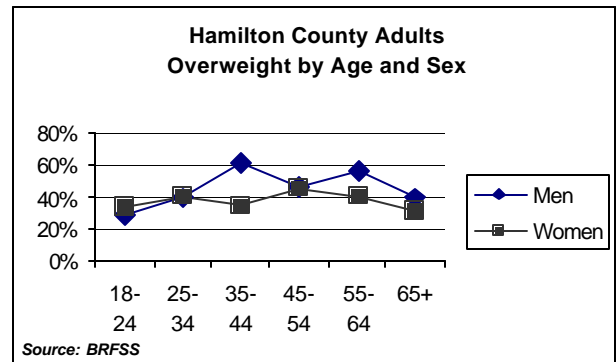
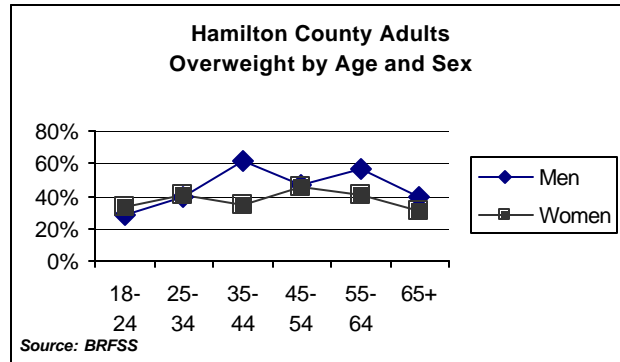
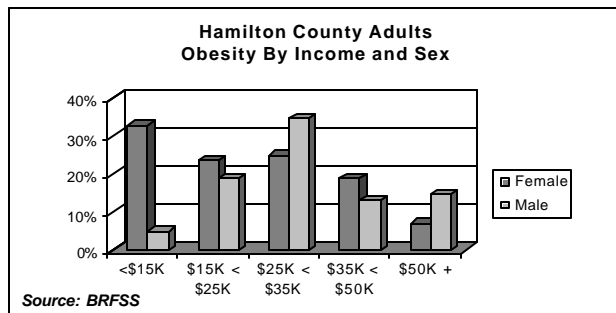
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Overweight



Obesity

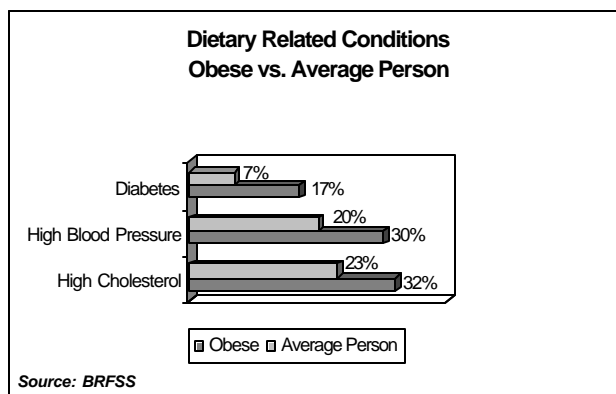


Overweight

- 41% of Hamilton County residents are overweight. Almost 18% are obese.
- Males are more likely to be overweight than females (46% vs. 37%).
- 17% of men and 19% of women are obese, a difference that is not statistically significant.
- Overall, the incidence of overweight increases with age until about age 65, when it starts to decline.
- Men and women experience weight gain at different ages. The peak age for overweight men is 35-44, while for women it is at ages 45-54.

Obesity

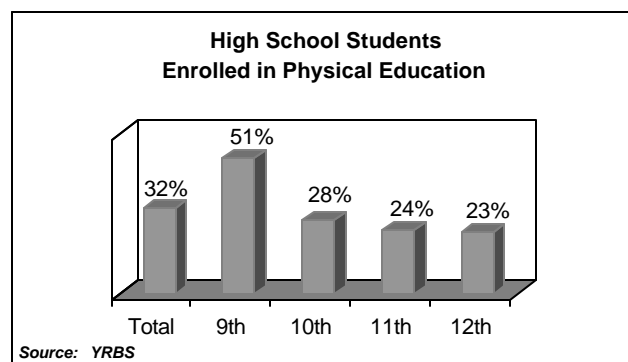
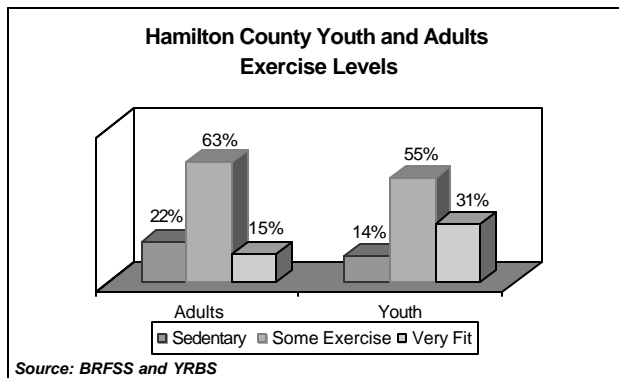
- Almost one in five adults in Hamilton County are obese.
- Overall, males and females reported obesity at similar levels. However, when considering household income, there are striking difference between men and women. Very low-income women were more than 5 times more likely to be obese than same income men, while higher income men tended to have more obesity than women with similar incomes.
- Nonwhite women were more than twice as likely to be obese as white females and all males. Thirty-seven percent of nonwhites females surveyed were obese versus 15% to 18% of other race/sex groups.
- Obesity is associated with greater risks for several chronic conditions. In Hamilton County, obese adults are more likely than the average adult to have high blood cholesterol (32% vs. 23%), high blood pressure (30% vs 20%) and diabetes (17% vs 7%).



Overweight and Obesity Defined: Body Mass Index*

Overweight is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) greater than 25. Obesity is defined as a BMI of 30 or greater. BMI describes body weight relative to height and is strongly correlated with total body fat content in adults. According to the guidelines, a BMI of 30 is about 30 pounds overweight and is equivalent to 221 pounds in a 6' person and to 186 pounds in someone who is 5'6". The BMI numbers apply to both men and women. Some very muscular people may have a high BMI without health risks. To compute BMI: $[\text{Weight} / \text{height (inches squared)}] \times 704.5$. (National Institutes of Health)

Physical Activity



Physical Activity

q 15% of adults and 31% of youth may be classified as “very fit,” engaging in all of the following each week: 3 or more aerobic workouts, 2 or more strengthening workouts, and 3 or more sessions of stretching exercises. An additional 63% of adults and 55% of youth engage in lesser amounts of exercise.

q 22% of adults and 14% of youth are “sedentary,” that is they do not engage in any exercise (neither aerobic, strengthening, nor stretching) in a typical week.

q Overall, males are more active than females. Not surprisingly, younger residents are more likely to be “very fit,” while older residents are most likely to be classified as “sedentary.” However, while about one-third of senior citizens are sedentary, 10% are “very fit,” and 58% doing some other level of physical activity.

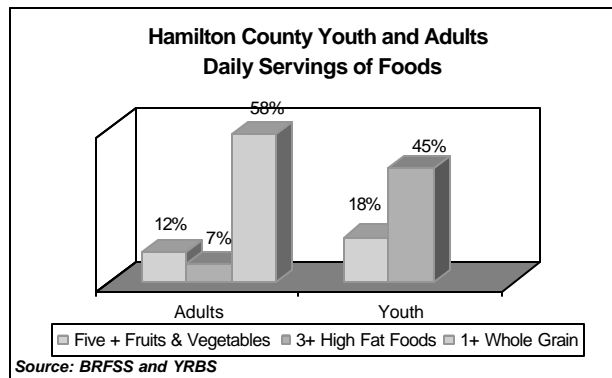
Physical Education and Sports Participation

q Only 32% of Hamilton County high school students are enrolled in physical education classes. An additional 20% of students who are not enrolled in physical education participate in team sports.

q Physical education participation is highest in the ninth grade (51%), falling to about 25% in the other grades.

q Among students enrolled in physical education, 41% spend less than 30 minutes actually exercising or playing sports.

Dietary Behaviors



Dietary Behaviors

q Only 12% of Hamilton County adults and 18% of Hamilton County youth ate the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

q 45% of Hamilton County youth reported having three or more servings of high fat food daily. Seven percent of adults reported having three or more servings of high fat food daily, while 40% had one or more servings. Daily consumption of high fat foods was highest among 18-to-24-year-olds (60%), and lowest among senior citizens (29%).

q 58% of respondents indicated they generally had one or more daily servings of whole grain breads, brown rice, beans, or bran. Older residents tended to eat more whole grains than younger residents.

This report represents a subset of data from the 1999 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) of 1,037 adults, and the 1998 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) of 2,990 Hamilton County public high school students. The questionnaires and methodologies used were similar to the Centers for Disease Control's BRFSS and YRBS surveys, which are conducted nationwide (the BRFSS survey annually; the YRBS biannually). While every effort was made to design questionnaires that would not be leading or tend to encourage particular responses, and the methodologies were designed to collect data in as impersonal a manner as possible, it should be remembered that all activities and personal information were self-reported. Due to the personal nature of this study and human nature, certain health-related behaviors may have been over- or under-reported.

The Economic Impact of Obesity and Lack of Exercise

- Overweight and physical inactivity account for more than 300,000 premature deaths each year in the U.S., second only to tobacco-related deaths. (*Centers for Disease Control*)
- Good exercise habits result in 10% lower employee healthcare expenditures. (*Health Enhancement Research Organization*)
- A study published in *The Physician and Sportsmedicine* found that physically active individuals had lower annual direct medical costs than did inactive people. The cost difference was \$459 per person, based on current (2000) dollars. (*Community Research Council estimates based on Centers for Disease Control reported data*)
- Hamilton County spends an estimated \$24.2 million annually on obesity-related heart disease. (*Community Research Council estimates based on Centers for Disease Control data*)
- The approximate annual cost to treat obesity-related hypertension in Hamilton County is \$1.6 million. (*Community Research Council estimates based on Centers for Disease Control data*)
- The cost to treat obesity related Type II diabetes is approximately \$9.8 million in Hamilton County. (*Community Research Council estimates based on Centers for Disease Control data*)
- The cost to treat obesity related gallbladder disease in Hamilton County is approximately \$786,000. (*Community Research Council estimates based on Centers for Disease Control data*)
- Healthcare expenditures for obese employees are 21% higher than for non-obese employees. (*Health Enhancement Research Organization*)

What Communities Can Do

- Provide environmental inducements to physical activity, such as safe, accessible, and attractive trails for walking and bicycling, and sidewalks with curb cuts.
- Open schools for community recreation, form neighborhood watch groups to increase safety, and encourage malls and other indoor or protected locations to provide safe places for walking in any weather.
- Provide community-based programs to meet the needs of specific populations, such as racial and ethnic minority groups, women, older adults, persons with disabilities, and low-income groups.
- Encourage health care providers to talk routinely to their patients about incorporation physical activity into their lives.
- Encourage employers to provide supportive worksite environments and policies that offer opportunities for employees to incorporate moderate physical activity into their daily lives.

Centers for Disease Control

Local Resources

Powerhouse Fitness Center-- At Warner Park 1254 East Third Street 697-1320. Admission 50 cents per visit. Features over 50 aerobic classes, an indoor track, free weights, weight machines, cardio machines, and taekwondo lessons. The powerhouse also offers programs for special populations such as chair aerobics. PACE classes for people with arthritis, and home schooled kids activities classes.

Chattanooga Lifestyle Center -- 325 Market Street 778-9400. A partnership between Erlanger Hospital and the Sports Barn Fitness Center, the Lifestyle Center teaches behavioral changes for a healthful lifestyle. They offer periodic classes and lectures on health and nutrition that are open to the general public.

Memorial Hospital Website www.memorial.org -- Follow links to "Loseweight" under "Centers" for the latest on nutrition, healthful eating as well as healthful recipes.

Eastridge Hospital Website www.eastridgehospital.com -- Follow links to "Healthy Eating" under "Healthy Living" for the latest on nutrition and how to change eating and lifestyle habits.

Chattanooga District Dietetic Association 697-2559