

Overweight and Obesity among High School Students in Vermont

Demographics and Maternal Level of Education (1 of 3)

Vermont 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Obesity

The past 30 years have seen an increase in overweight and obesity rates among adolescents in the U.S.^{1,2} The immediate and long term health effects of this increase are a cause for concern.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines child and adolescent obesity and overweight as:

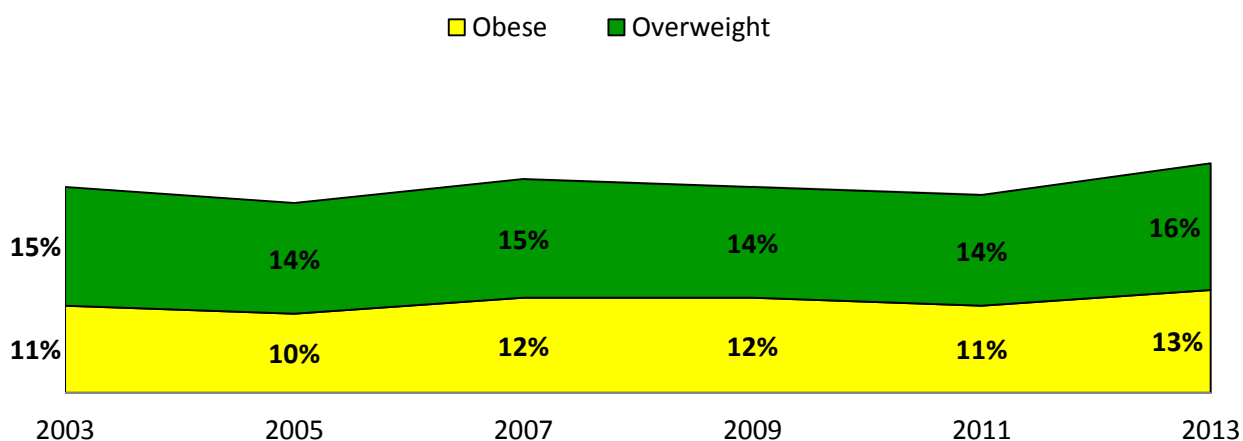
- **Overweight** is defined as a BMI³ at or above the 85th percentile and lower than the 95th percentile for children of the same age and sex.⁴
- **Obesity** is defined as a BMI at or above the 95th percentile for children of the same age and sex.⁴

The Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) asks high school students to report their weight and height. From this information, estimates for BMI are derived. The graphics below summarize differences by core demographic measures from the 2013 YRBS survey. This is the first of three data briefs on this subject using 2013 data.

Trend Over Time

The prevalence of obesity and overweight is increasing in Vermont. Three in ten Vermont youth are either overweight or obese.

Percent of students who are obese and overweight, by year



Obesity by County

Grand Isle and Chittenden counties are the only Vermont counties whose obesity prevalence differs significantly from Vermont. Grand Isle County has a significantly higher obesity prevalence (23%) than the state average of 13%, while the prevalence in Chittenden County (10%) is significantly lower than the state average.

1. Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Kit BK, Flegal KM. Prevalence of obesity and trends in body mass index among US children and adolescents, 1999-2010. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 2012;307(5):483-490.

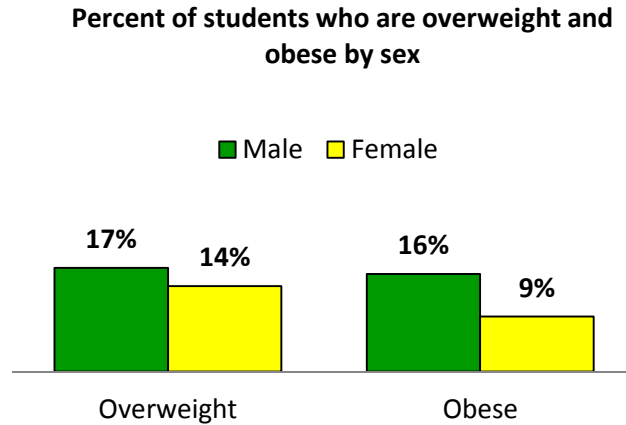
2. National Center for Health Statistics. *Health, United States, 2011: With Special Features on Socioeconomic Status and Health*. Hyattsville, MD; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2012.

3. Body mass index (BMI) = weight(kilograms)/height(meters²)

4. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/basics.html>

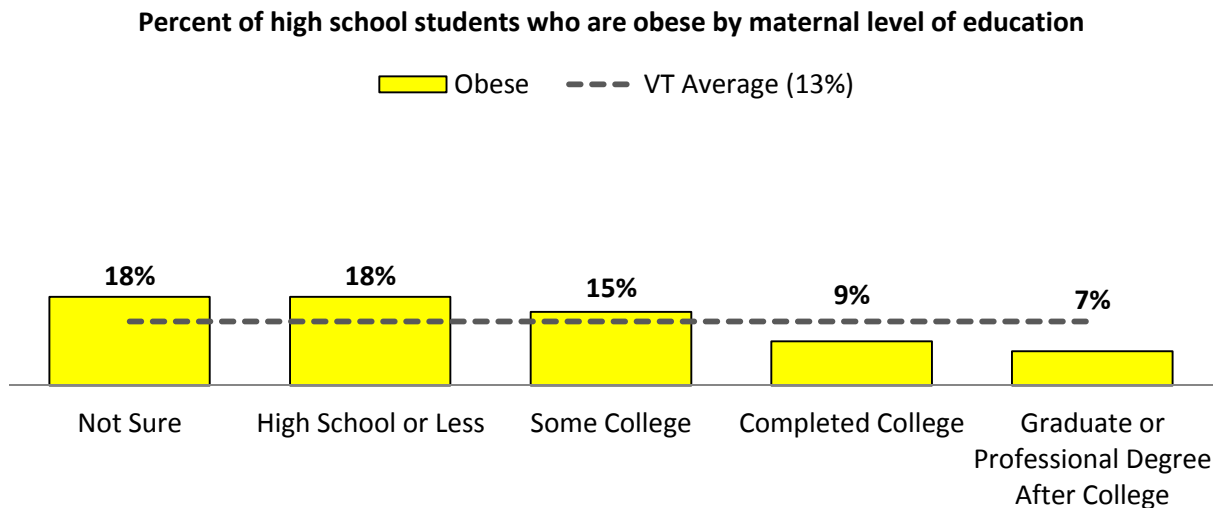
Grade and Sex

In Vermont, male students are more likely to report being overweight or obese compared to female students (17% vs. 14%). Of note, female students are more likely to underreport their weight than male students, so while it is possible female students are less likely to be overweight or obese, the difference is probably less extreme than it appears.⁵ Overweight and obesity do not differ by grade or race.



Obesity and Maternal Level of Education

The YRBS asks students to identify the highest level of education obtained by their mother. This measure is used as a proxy for socioeconomic status. In 2013, students who reported their mother's highest level of education as high school or less, some college, or not sure were all more likely to be obese compared to the Vermont average. Students who reported their mother's highest level of education as completed college or graduate or professional school after college were less likely to be obese compared to the Vermont average.



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⁵ Brener ND, McManus T, Galuska DA, Lowry R, Wechsler H. Reliability and validity of self-reported height and weight among high school students. *J Adolesc Health* 2003;32:281-7