

## Obesity in the Senior Population

**Body Mass Index**, BMI, is calculated from a person's weight and height and provides a reasonable indicator of body fatness.

A BMI of less than 25 is considered a normal adult weight. Overweight adults have a BMI of 25 through 29. Obesity is defined as a BMI of 30 or greater.

### Obesity Health Consequences

Research has shown that as weight increases to overweight and obese, the risks for the following conditions increase:<sup>1, 2</sup>

- Coronary heart disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon)
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- High total cholesterol or high levels of triglycerides
- Stroke
- Liver and Gallbladder disease
- Sleep apnea and respiratory problems
- Osteoarthritis (a degeneration of cartilage and its underlying bone within a joint)
- Gynecological problems (abnormal menses, infertility)

**Healthy People 2010** is a set of national health objectives developed to help individuals of all ages increase life expectancy and improve their quality of life.

The Healthy People 2010 goal for the percentage of people who are overweight or obese in the 60 and older age group is 24% (26% for females and 21% for males).

Healthy People 2020 is under development and will include a goal to reduce the percentage of overweight and obese people in all age groups.

### HARC Study Results – Weight Status

In the study of Eastern Riverside County performed by the Health Assessment Resource Center, Inc in 2007, obesity in senior population stood out as a serious health problem: over half our seniors are overweight or obese based on their calculated body mass index.

56.7% of seniors 55 to 64 are overweight or obese

55.7% of seniors 65 and older are overweight or obese

Results from the 2007 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) show a similar problem in Riverside County and statewide in California:

65.5% of Riverside County and 65.3% of California's seniors 55 to 64 were overweight or obese

62.6% of Riverside County and 56.3% of California's seniors 65 and older were overweight or obese

# Obesity in the Senior Population

## Preventing Obesity related Diseases

The health cost of obesity in the United States is \$147 billion per year, according to the CDC. The percentage of all medical costs that are attributable to obesity grew from 6.5% in 1998 to 9.1% in 2006. People who are obese spent 42% more for medical care in 2006 than people at a normal weight.<sup>3</sup>

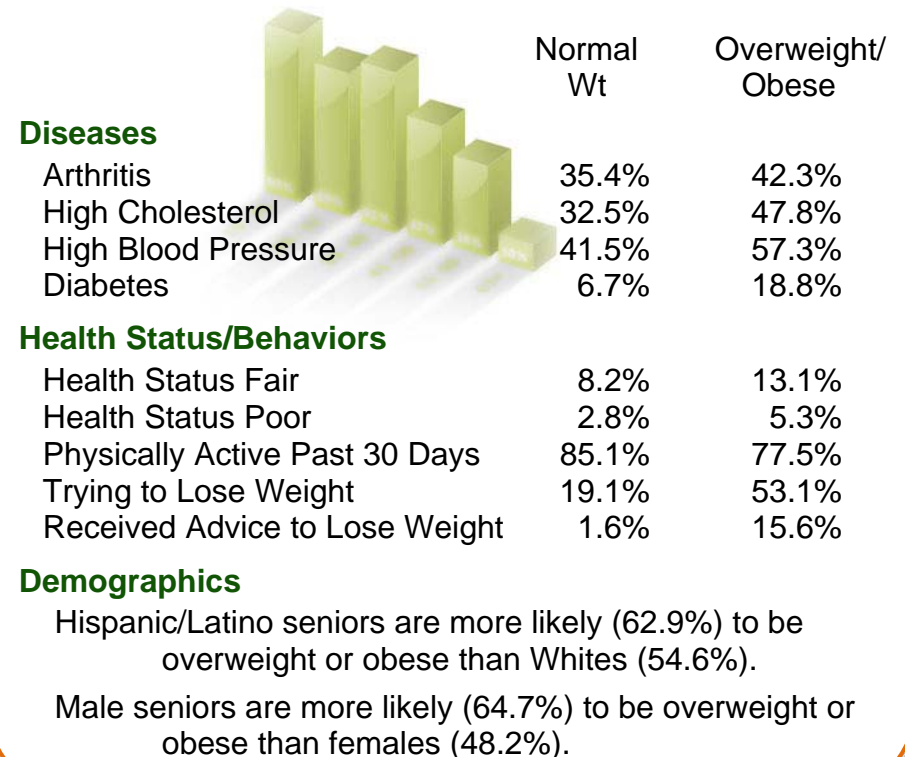
Engaging in regular daily physical activity is very beneficial for older adults. Some of the benefits include: a reduction in falls; lower risk of developing coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, or diabetes; and increased physical strength and stamina. In addition, physical activity can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression and helps to maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints.

Physical *inactivity* contributes to a loss of strength and stamina in older adults. The CDC recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week for older adults.<sup>4</sup>



## HARC Study Results

The 2007 HARC study found that overweight or obese seniors (55+) in Eastern Riverside County differ from their normal weight counterparts on a number of factors.



## References

- <sup>1</sup> [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult\\_bmi/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult_bmi/index.html)
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/causes/health.html>
- <sup>3</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/media/pressrel/2009/r090727.htm>
- <sup>4</sup> [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/physical\\_activity/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/physical_activity/index.html)