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Report: Obesity Spreads To Higher Incomes

The poor are most likely to be fat, but the more affluent are closing the gap.

Obesity is growing fastest among Americans who make more than \$60,000 a year, researchers reported Monday.

"This is a very surprising finding," said Dr. Jennifer Robinson of the University of Iowa, whose study was presented at a meeting of the American Heart Association.

But it "underlines the whole complexity" of the obesity epidemic, she said.

For years doctors have known that the people most likely to be overweight have the lowest incomes. Fresh produce and other healthful fare can be expensive as well as less accessible than fast food and other high-fat options in low-income neighborhoods.

Just last week a report criticized the government nutrition program that feeds millions of low-income women and children for, among other things, providing hardly any fresh produce and favoring high-calorie juice over fruit.

But even as the nation's obesity rates have soared since the 1970s, disposable income has, too, and Robinson wondered what role the extra change was having on waistlines.

She and graduate student Nidhi Maheshwari, who presented the findings, culled decades of data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys, one of the government's prime health databases, to compare obesity with family income.

In the early 1970s, 22.5 percent of people with incomes below \$25,000 were obese. By 2002, 32.5 percent of the poor were, they found.

Just 9.7 percent of people with incomes above \$60,000 were obese in the 1970s -- a figure that jumped to 26.8 percent in 2002.

For purposes of comparison, all the income figures were adjusted to reflect year 2000 dollars.

Money for quality food aside, higher-income people are thought to be better educated and to have better access to health care, so why such a jump among them?

In an interview, Robinson said no one yet knows. But she speculated that longer commutes, growing popularity of restaurants and possibly longer work hours since the 1970s are playing a role.

The poor still are the most likely to be fat, said Dr. Adam Drewnowski of the University of Washington, an expert on the problem. Moreover, since the '70s, rates of extreme obesity --

being 90 to 100 pounds or more overweight -- have ballooned among lower-income groups, something the study doesn't address, he said.

Further complicating attempts to compare income and obesity are cultural factors.

Certain racial and ethnic groups positively equate a man's girth with wealth -- it's a sign of success, Drewnowski said.

"I would caution against any attempts to interpret these data to say social differences have disappeared," he said.

"It just shows that obesity is a general problem and it's now affecting pretty much everybody. ... But it would be very shortsighted to stop paying attention to the people who are most vulnerable."

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May 10-12, 2005

Harvest Blend Regular

- Romaine Lettuce
- Carrots
- Rosemary
- Cremini Mushrooms
- Sweet Onions
- Jewell Sweet Potatoes
- Roma Tomatoes
- Hass Avocado
- Blood Oranges
- Gala Apples
- Ruby Grapefruit
- Bananas
- Aualfo Mango

See the web site for details on our other options. Produce bag contents are subject to change based on availability.



"A number of rare or newly experienced foods have been claimed to be aphrodisiacs. At one time this quality was even ascribed to the tomato. Reflect on that when you are next preparing the family salad."

- Jane Grigson

Organic Poultry Available Now

Due to extremely popular demand, we're now offering organic chicken and turkey.

Because this will be special ordered, you will need to place any poultry orders by Friday at 9 am, *the week before delivery*, to ensure you receive your chicken.

Chicken legs are available in 10# bags, and whole chickens and turkeys are also available, averaging four pounds each.

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Yet today, the obesity remedies most often recommended for Americans in general -- eat fresh salads, go ride a bike -- are impossible for many low-income families, Drewnowski said.

Exercise can be hard in inner cities, where the streets may be too dangerous after working hours.

Many grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods don't stock

expensive fresh produce. And people who work two or three jobs have little time to make home-cooked meals.

Robinson agreed: "I don't want to take focus away from the serious racial and ethnic disparities in health."

But, she said, it's likely that different factors play a role in spurring obesity among the middle class than the poor. "We need to have a lot more research ... to tailor our interventions to specific populations."

Recipes

Beef Tenderloin with Mushroom Gravy

- 1 whole beef tenderloin roast (about 4 pounds), trimmed
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 2 tbsps vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 2-1/2 cups beef broth
- 1/2 cup dry white wine or water
- 12 ounces white mushrooms, cleaned and sliced thin
- 2 tsps chopped fresh rosemary



Heat the oven to 500 degrees F. Rub the beef with the oil and sprinkle with the pepper. Place diagonally on a 15-1/2 x 10-1/2-inch jelly roll pan, tucking the thin end under for even cooking. Roast for 25 to 30 minutes, or until a meat thermometer inserted into the center of the thickest part registers 135 degrees F. for rare.

Meanwhile, make the gravy. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the flour and whisk for 2 to 4 minutes, or until a dark golden color. Slowly whisk in the broth and wine, then the mushrooms, rosemary, salt, and pepper. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened.

Remove the meat from the oven, cover loosely with foil, and let stand for about 10 minutes, or until a meat thermometer registers 140 degrees F. The meat will continue cooking and the slicing will be easier. Slice 1/4-inch thick and arrange on a serving platter. Garnish with rosemary sprigs and serve with the mushroom gravy.

Bahama Breeze's Seasoned Goat Cheese with Croutons

- 1 tbsp Olive Oil
- 1/4 cup Sweet Onion, diced
- 4 oz. wt. Fresh Chevre Goat Cheese
- 2 Roma tomatoes, seeded and diced
- 1 tbsp cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 tsp hot pepper sauce
- salt and pepper
- 1/2 loaf Cuban Bread or French Baguette Bread, cut crosswise into 1/4" Slices
- 4 tbsp butter, softened to room temperature

- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp parsley, chopped

First, make the croutons. Cut the bread crosswise into 1/4" thick slices, and set aside. In a small mixing bowl blend one clove of garlic, chopped parsley and softened butter until thoroughly mixed. Spread the top and bottom of each slice of bread with about 1/2 tsp of garlic butter on each side. Place the buttered croutons on a cookie sheet. Bake for 5 minutes in a 350°F, preheated, oven.

Heat the olive oil in a medium sauté pan over medium heat, then add the other garlic and onions and sauté just until the onions become translucent. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature. Transfer the onion-garlic mixture to a mixing bowl and add the remaining ingredients. Mix with a rubber spatula to thoroughly blend. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper to taste.

Pan-Fried Rosemary Potatoes

- 5 ounces Fontina or Taleggio cheese
- 1-1/2 to 2 lbs large red or russet potatoes
- salt and pepper
- 6 fresh sage leaves, roughly chopped
- 1-1/2 tsp roughly chopped fresh rosemary
- 3 tbsp virgin olive oil

Cut the cheese into small cubes and let them warm to room temperature while the rest of the dish is prepared. Wash the potatoes, even off the ends, and slice them lengthwise about 1/2 inch thick. Slice each slab into thirds and each resulting stick into pieces to end up with cubes. Discard the odd-shaped small pieces, which are likely to burn later on.

Bring a pot of water to a boil, add salt to taste and the potatoes, and cook until they are just barely done, about 8 minutes. Pour them into a strainer, rinse them quickly in cool water, and set them on a towel to dry.

Heat the oil in a wide skillet (preferably cast iron). When it's hot, lower the heat to medium and add the potatoes. Let them sit for several minutes until they begin to form a crust on the bottom; then begin shaking the pan every few minutes so that the potatoes will turn and color on all sides. When they are nicely browned, add the herbs and the pepper. Quickly toss the cubes of cheese among the potatoes and serve right away.