

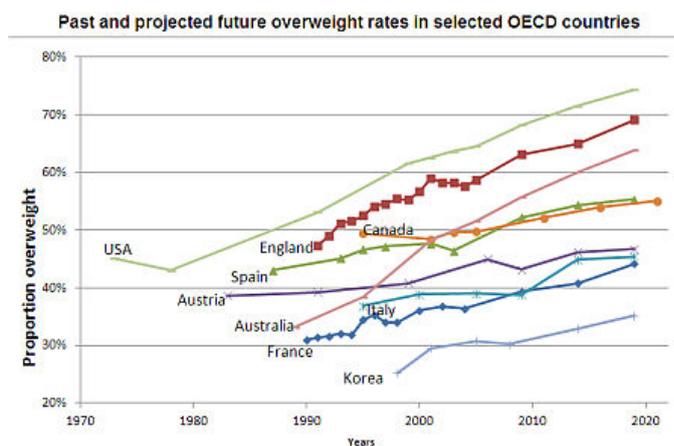
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Home: [Newsroom](#) >**Health: OECD says governments must fight fat**[Send](#) [Print](#) 

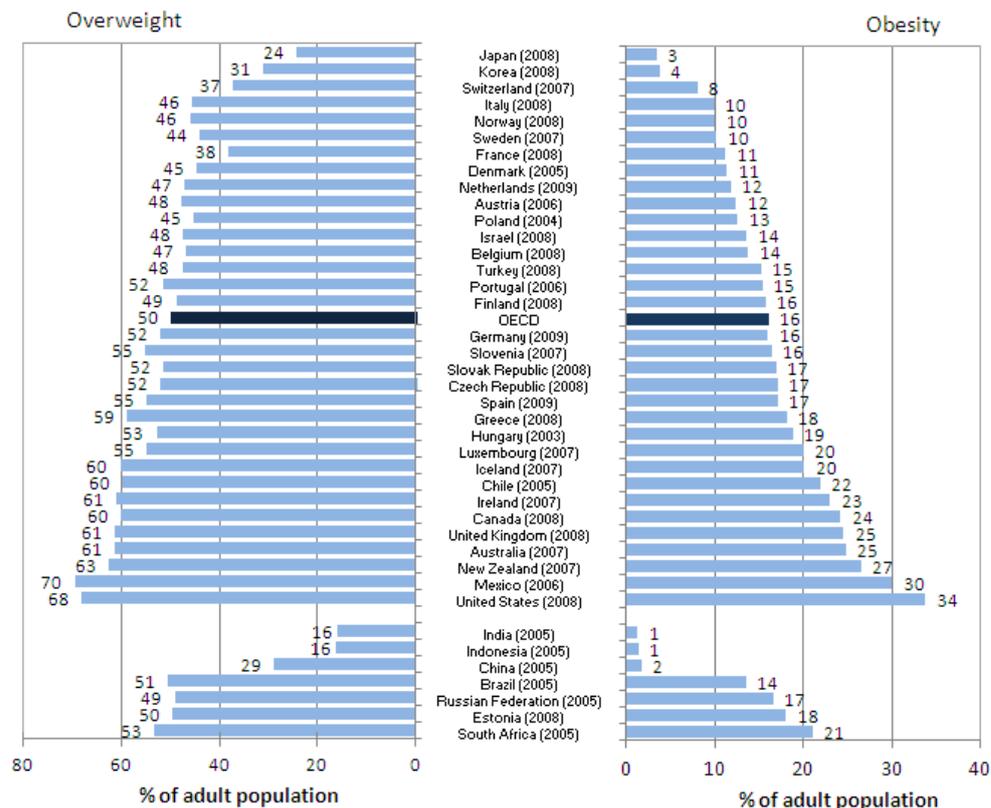
23/09/2010 - This new [OECD report](#) examines the current obesity epidemic, giving new comparative data, trends and projections across OECD countries and outlining causes and costs. It also notes ways in which the private sector and governments encouraged obesity and makes recommendations for ways they can contribute to combating it.

Since the 1980s, obesity has spread at an alarming rate. Changes in food supply and eating habits, combined with a dramatic fall in physical activity, have made obesity a global epidemic. Across OECD countries, one in 2 adults is currently overweight and 1 in 6 is obese. The rate of overweight people is projected to increase by a further 1% per year for the next 10 years in some countries.

[Click here for the data](#)

Rates are highest in the United States and Mexico and lowest in Japan and Korea, but have been growing virtually everywhere. Children have not been spared, with up to 1 in 3 currently overweight. Severely obese people die 8-10 years sooner than those of normal-weight, similar to smokers, and they are more likely to develop diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. Obesity is a burden on health systems, with health care expenditure for an obese person at least 25% higher than for someone of normal weight.

Obesity and overweight in OECD and non-OECD countries (adults)



[Click here for the data](#)

Cooperation between governments and the private sector is key to the success of combating obesity. A prevention strategy combining health promotion campaigns, government regulation and family doctors counselling their obese patients would avoid hundreds of thousands of deaths from chronic diseases every year. It would cost from USD 10 to USD 30 per person, depending on the country. Failure would impose heavy burdens of future generations.

Health ministers of OECD countries will be discussing obesity and the economics of prevention: Fit not fat when they meet at the OECD 7 – 8 October 2010.

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For further information about the OECD report, please contact Franco Sassi at franco.Sassi@oecd.org or + 33 1 45 24 92 39.

Also available:

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[Top of page](#)

