

South Carolina in Top 10 Most Obese States; NC Not Far Behind

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The [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) (RWJF) and the Trust for America's Health (TFAH) today released their annual report "F as in Fat." Out of the top 10 most obese states (9 of 10 which are in the South), South Carolina ranks number 8 with an obesity rate among adults at 30.9%. North Carolina's obesity rate is just shy of 30% (29.4%), which ranks the Tarheel State at number 14.

The good news for North Carolinians, though, is that at least the state is not getting any worse since the last report was issued. And thankfully, neither North or South Carolina are among the top 10 for childhood obesity rates. But South Carolina is at number 10 for having the largest increase in obesity rates since 1995.

While there are many factors that increase the risk of obesity among both adults and children, it is undeniable that poor diet and lack of exercise are significant contributors to excess weight. Overall, the Southern states dominate the country in having the highest rates of inactivity. North Carolina ranks 18th and South Carolina ranks 11th in level of physical inactivity among adults.

Fruit and vegetable consumption are often used as markers for a healthful diet. Seven of the states with the lowest rates of produce intake are also in the top 10 for obesity, and yes, the majority of those are in the South. South Carolina ties with Kansas at number 7 for lowest intake of fruits and vegetables among adults.

Obesity puts both adults and children at an increased risk for more than 20 major diseases, including diabetes and heart disease. This in turn affects our medical costs, workforce productivity, and global economy – so it affects us all.

South Carolina is 8th in the nation for having the largest percentage of adult diabetics. North Carolina is also included in the "diabetes belt" – a region of the country that has more diabetics than any other – with a ranking of 13th. North and South Carolina are side by side at 10th and 9th, respectively, for hypertension rates.

There is a lot we can do as Carolinians to turn this tide. Schools are a critical environment for promoting healthy habits, because if children learn early to eat right and exercise, they are more likely to stick with it into adulthood. But parents should remain good role models for their children to follow. Make simple changes daily, and soon both the scale and your health will show great improvement.

Start today by cutting out at least one fast food meal and prepare a healthful dinner for the whole family. Bake meats and fish instead of frying. Throw in a fresh vegetable or two and offer fruit as a dessert or snack. And then get out if you can for a walk together as a family. If your neighborhood isn't conducive to walking, try a local park. Just south of Charlotte, between Rock Hill and Fort Mill along the Catawba River, families can enjoy the new [Riverwalk](#) trail – a 2 ¼ mile portion of the Trails and Greenways System

as well as the Carolina Thread Trail, a regional network of trails and greenways spanning 15 counties and connecting over two million people. Walk, cycle or jog while enjoying nature at its best.

For the full "F as in Fat 2011" report, visit www.rwjf.org.

<http://www.examiner.com/diet-and-exercise-in-charlotte/south-carolina-top-10-most-obese-states-nc-not-far-behind>