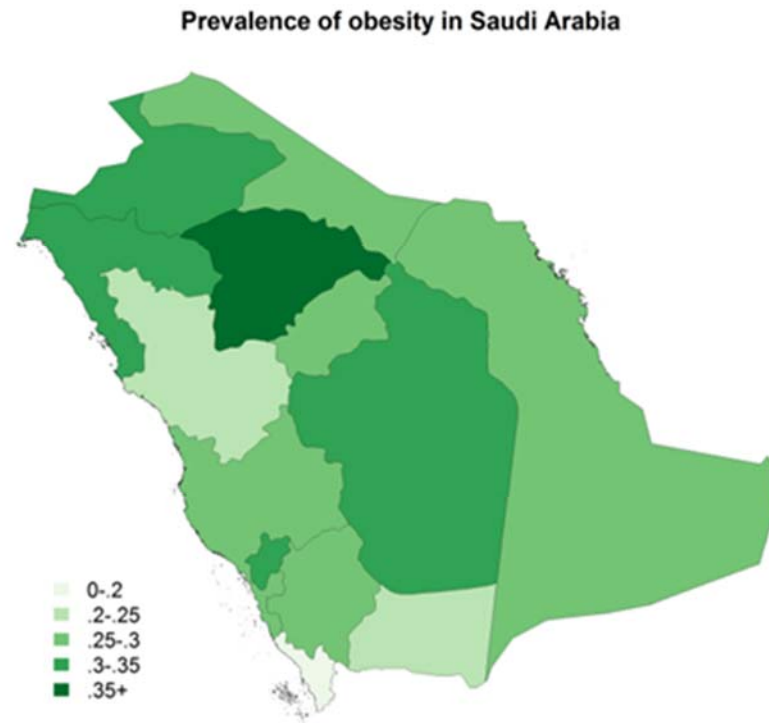


Adult obesity at a glance

The Saudi Burden of Disease 2010 study showed that elevated body mass index (BMI) was the single leading risk factor for disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2010. Obesity accounted for 11.8% and 11.1% of DALYs for males and females, respectively. Elevated BMI is strongly associated with higher risks of chronic diseases including cardiovascular diseases, certain cancers, and diabetes. Moreover, it is strongly associated with disability and sleep apnea.

Recent data from the Saudi Health Interview Survey (SHIS) show high rates of obesity in the Kingdom. This large household survey showed that the prevalence of obesity, defined as a BMI of 30 kg/m² or greater, was 28.7% in 2013. The prevalence was higher among females than males, 33.5% and 24.1% respectively. The prevalence increased by age and was highest among those aged 55 to 64, with levels of 48.0%. Morbid obesity, defined as a BMI of greater than 40 kg/m² was 2.5% in men and 4.7% in women. The prevalence of obesity varied by region with the highest prevalence in Ha'il with the lowest in Jizan.



The results from the SHIS indicate that obesity is associated with diabetes and high blood pressure. Obesity prevalence was 44.2% among those who have diabetes compared to 27.8% among those who do not. Similarly, it was 51.0% among those who have hypertension compared to 24.8% among those who do not.

The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Health utilizes a public health approach to address the role of nutrition and physical activity in improving health and preventing and controlling chronic diseases. The scope of the Ministry's activities includes leadership, policy and guidelines development, surveillance, epidemiological and behavioral research, intervention development, technical assistance to regions and communities, training and education, communication, and partnership development.

Obesity is a risk factor for:

High blood pressure	Excessive fat tissue draws oxygen and nutrients from the blood. This requires blood vessels to circulate more blood, increases the workload of the heart, and causes heightened pressure on artery walls.
Diabetes	Obesity, even if moderate, is a major risk factor for Type 2 diabetes, which generally begins in adulthood but has been occurring with greater frequency in children. This occurs because obesity increases resistance to insulin, the hormone that regulates blood sugar.
Heart disease	Atherosclerosis, a hardening of the arteries, is ten times more likely to occur in obese people compared to non-obese people. Risk of coronary artery disease is also elevated, due to buildup of fatty deposits in the arteries supplying the heart. Such narrowed arteries and reduced blood flow to the heart may also cause angina (chest pain) or heart attacks.
Joint problems, including osteoarthritis	Excess weight increases stress on joints and may cause knee and hip issues over time.
Sleep apnea and respiratory problems	Sleep apnea, a condition in which one stops breathing for brief periods, interrupts sleep, causes heavy snoring, and results in fatigue during the day. Respiratory issues associated with obesity occur when the increased weight of the chest wall compresses the lungs and restricts breathing.
Cancer	For women, elevated BMI is associated with an increased risk for breast, colon, gallbladder, and uterus cancers. For men, it is associated with colon and prostate cancers.
Metabolic syndrome	Metabolic syndrome, consisting of elevated blood pressure, insulin resistance, elevation of elements of the blood associated with inflammation, and elevation of clotting agents in the blood.
Psychosocial effects	In today's society where physical attractiveness is associated with thinness, those with elevated BMI are often judged negatively.

Source: Stanford Hospital and Clinics, "Health Effects of Obesity", found at <http://stanfordhospital.org/clinicsmedServices/COE/surgicalServices/generalSurgery/bariatricsurgery/obesity/effects.html>. Accessed December 15, 2013.

Fad diets, programs that advertise quick or extreme weight loss, are often not grounded in science. By not providing sufficient nutrients or subscribing to a sustainable approach to weight reduction, these diets are notorious for failing. Getting sufficient exercise, balancing nutrient intake, and tailoring calorie consumption to amount of calories burned per day is a healthier, more sustainable method for weight loss. Maintaining a healthy weight is a key component of good health, particularly as you grow older.

Source: Centers for Disease Control, "Healthy Weight – it's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!" found at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/>, Accessed December 15, 2013

Take control to maintain a healthy weight:

Assess your weight

The first step is to determine whether or not your current weight is healthy. The Body Mass Index is one way to measure your weight. It is defined as your weight in kilograms divided by your height in meters squared. A value of 25 to < 30 indicates overweight while a value of 30 or more is obese.

Lose weight

Healthy weight loss is not just about a "diet" or "program." It's about an ongoing lifestyle that includes long-term changes in daily eating and exercise habits.

Prevent weight gain

To stay at a healthy weight, it is worth doing a little planning now. If you are overweight but aren't ready to lose weight, preventing further weight gain is a worthy goal.

Source: Centers for Disease Control, "Healthy Weight – it's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!" .Found at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/index.html>, Accessed December 15, 2013.