

Here and Away: Obesity rates

By Pamela Swanigan

“Overweight” indicates a Body Mass Index of 25 or over, “obese” a BMI of 30 or over, “morbidly obese” a BMI of 40 or over. Categories are additional; that is, the figures for “overweight” do not include the figures for “obese,” nor “obese” those for “morbidly obese.” Newfoundland and Nova Scotia have the highest overweight/obesity rates in Canada, while Alberta and B.C. have the lowest. West Virginia and Mississippi have the highest overweight/obese rates in the U.S., Hawaii and Colorado the lowest.

Nova Scotia: 37.5% overweight; 23.7% obese; 2.3% morbidly obese. Overweight/obese rate: 63.5%.

Newfoundland: 41.8% overweight; 27.7% obese; 2.6% morbidly obese.

PEI: 34.3% overweight; 23.5% obese; 2.5% morbidly obese.

Quebec: 33.3% overweight; 16.8% obese; 1.2% morbidly obese.

Ontario: 33.7% overweight; 18.4% obese; 1.7% morbidly obese.

Manitoba: 36.5% overweight; 21.6% obese; 2.4% morbidly obese.

Alberta: 33% overweight; 19.3% obese; 1.4% morbidly obese

BC: 31.3% overweight; 14.5% obese; 1.2% morbidly obese.

West Virginia: 37.2% overweight; 20.8% obese; 4.2% morbidly obese. Overweight/obese rate: 69.3%.

Iowa: overweight 36.7%; obese 18.5%; morbidly obese 5.2%..

California: 36.5% overweight; 14.6% obese; 3% morbidly obese.

Colorado: 37.1% overweight; 12.8% obese; 1.2% morbidly obese.

U.K. (excluding Scotland and Wales): 42% of men and 32% of women overweight; 24% of men and 25% of women obese; 3.1% of women and 1.7% of men morbidly obese.

Scotland: 37.2% overweight; 27.1% obese. Overweight/obese rate: 64.3%.

Denmark: 13.4% obese.

Spain: 16% obese.

Japan: 3.5% obese.

South Africa: 44% of women overweight, 25% of women obese. Female overweight/obese rate: 69.3%.

Sources: Global News; Laurie K. Twells, Deborah M. Gregory, Jacincta Reddigan, and William K. Midodzi, “Current and predicted prevalence of obesity in Canada: a trend analysis”, *CMAJ* March 2014; Kiley McGeeney and Elizabeth Mendes, “In U.S., Majority Overweight or Obese in All 50 States,” *Gallup Well-Being* 2012; “Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet: England 2014,” Health and Social Care Information Centre (U.K.); Public Health England; Ian Birrell, “Obesity: Africa’s new crisis,” *The Guardian* September 21 2014.