

Supersized America: U.S. Obesity Rates to Skyrocket into 2030

By J. D. Heyes, *Natural News*

While many Americans have gotten the message and changed their diet and exercise habits in order to tone up and slim down in the name of better health, far too many of us are continuing to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to a growing cacophony of warnings from experts who say the nation's current path towards rising obesity rates is just not sustainable.

The latest warning comes in the form of a new report by the *Trust for America's Health* and the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*, which has projected that *half* of U.S. adults will be obese by 2030 unless there is a massive change in our habits.

The report, titled "F as in Fat," lays bare the current gloomy outlook regarding the U.S. obesity epidemic. Researchers note that currently, 35.7 percent of adults and 16.9 percent of children age 2 to 19 are obese, figures reported earlier this year by the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*.

For the first time; however, the report uses state-by-state data from the CDC "to project obesity rates," *Reuters* reported. The data indicate that in every state, the rate will reach at least 44 percent by 2030. In 13 states, the rate would exceed a staggering 60 percent.

As the nation remains embroiled in a debate over healthcare - how it should be delivered, how it should be funded, insurance costs, etc. - there is an underlying reality which accompanies the epidemic and it is this: Higher obesity rates will lead to higher rates of heart disease, diabetes, stroke and other medical problems, which will exponentially increase healthcare *costs*. What's more, neither a cash-strapped federal government nor the average citizen - who will be forced to bear insurance costs of thousands of dollars per year for a sub-standard plan - will be able to pick up the extra tab.

'C' as in 'Costs

The report notes this phenomenon.

Researchers are projecting as many as 7.9 million new cases of diabetes annually, compared with 1.9 million new cases in recent years. They also warn there could be 6.8 million new cases of chronic heart disease and stroke every year, compared to 1.3 million new cases a year now.

These additional cases will add \$66 billion to medical costs over and above today's \$147 billion, making the total bill somewhere north of \$210 billion.

Right now, total U.S. healthcare spending is estimated to be around \$2.7 trillion.

It's not like we haven't been warned. These current projections are in line with those made in a study earlier this year in the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, which found that by 2030, 42 percent of U.S. adults could be obese, adding \$550 billion to healthcare costs over that period of time.

Doesn't have to be this way

The report makes dire predictions, to be sure, but the reality is, whether or not they come true are really up to us.

"This is a tale of two futures," Jeffrey Levi of *George Washington University* and the executive director of *Trust for America's Health*, told *Reuters*. "We're at a turning point where if we don't do something now to mitigate these trends, the cost in human health and healthcare spending will be enormous."

The report notes that obesity is defined as having a BMI - body mass index - above 30. Overweight means a BMI 25-29.9 BMI figures are calculated by taking a person's weight in pounds and dividing it by the square of height in inches, then multiplying that result by 703.

According to previous data, obesity rates among U.S. adults have more than doubled - from 15 percent in 1980 to current rates. What's more, the rates have tripled among children.

Sources:

<http://www.reuters.com>