

NUTRITION SECTION



Georgia's Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative

to prevent obesity and other chronic diseases



What is the purpose of the initiative?

The purpose of this initiative is two-fold: to promote healthy weight for all Georgians through breastfeeding, healthy eating, physical activity and reduced TV/Screen Time; and to provide leadership in addressing the increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity in Georgians.

What does the initiative do?

The initiative currently promotes a health-centered approach as opposed to a weight-centered approach to obesity, focusing on healthy behaviors such as healthy eating, being physically active, and breastfeeding. This initiative is currently focused on infrastructure building and partnership building, data collection, surveillance and the development of comprehensive population-based strategies. Partnerships include networks that involve community leaders, scientists, health professionals, educators and policy makers. In July 2003, Georgia was one of 17 states to be awarded a Capacity Building Grant for the prevention of obesity and other chronic diseases, as part of a 5-year funding stream. This funding has enabled DHR to lead the development of a comprehensive Nutrition and Physical Activity State Plan for the prevention of obesity and other chronic diseases. Implementation of the plan began in July 2005.

How many people can be helped through this initiative?

Through existing multi-sectoral partnerships and collaborative efforts this initiative has the potential to impact all Georgians.

Why is this initiative important?

The prevalence of overweight and obesity among adults in the United States is increasing to epidemic proportions. This trend is also a concern with children across the nation. Overweight and obesity are linked to the development of many chronic diseases such as type II diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and some types of cancer.

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of adult Georgians reported being overweight or obese (i.e. a Body Mass Index (BMI) greater than or equal to 25). Thirty-three percent (33%) and 26% percent of Georgia's middle school and high school students respectively were at-risk for overweight or overweight (BMI-for-age greater than the 85th percentile). Twenty-six percent (26%) of GA WIC children aged 2-5 are at-risk for overweight (14%) or overweight (12%). However, only 40% of adults reported being regularly active and 23% reported eating the recommended 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of middle school and 59% of high school students reported being vigorously active.

The development of overweight and obesity is complex but is largely modifiable through improved healthy eating practices and increased physical activity. Its prevention and management requires a comprehensive approach that is involving a variety of strategies and multiple sectors at the national, state and local level.

Who is eligible?

All residents of Georgia.

Where are programs and services located?

Statewide. Pilot projects include: Fulton County Tween Intervention, Nutrition and Physical Activity Grant-In-Aids to Waycross and Augusta; Health Matters: state employee worksite wellness initiative ().

Outcome measures

Key behavioral outcomes include: fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity levels, breastfeeding, and TV viewing. Long-term health outcome measures are the BMI for adults and BMI-for-age for children and adolescents.

Legislative Authority

No specific legislative authority but national and state initiatives are being developed to address the epidemic.

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<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/nutrition/>

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