

NEWS RELEASE

MEDIA INQUIRIES:
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health Department and FORWARD Call for Community Action to Prevent and Reduce Obesity

DUPAGE COUNTY—The DuPage County Health Department and FORWARD, a countywide, public-private partnership promoting increased healthy eating and physical activity in DuPage County, have released the most recent publication on the rates of obesity in DuPage County, titled “Call to Action on Obesity: Making Healthy Lifestyles a Priority in DuPage County.”

What the data say:

- The rate of obesity in DuPage County public school students declined from 15.7 percent in 2011-2012 to 14.4 percent in 2015-2016.
- Still, more than one in seven (14.4 percent) kindergarten, sixth grade, and ninth grade public school students in DuPage County were obese in 2015-2016.
- Additionally, in 2015-2016, 42 percent of all obese students had an elevated blood pressure reading.
- Obesity among DuPage County children aged 2 to 4 years enrolled in the United States Department of Agriculture's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (15.5 percent in 2015) was higher than the national obesity rate among children aged 2 to 4 years enrolled in WIC (14.5 percent in 2014), and was almost double the most recent national estimate for children aged 2 to 5 years (8.9 percent), stressing the need for early intervention.
- In 2014, more than one in five (23 percent) of surveyed DuPage County adults reported being obese.

Why is this important? Childhood obesity has both immediate and long-term effects on health and well-being. An obese child is more likely to be obese through adolescence and have high cholesterol, high blood sugar, asthma, and mental health problems.

Furthermore, an obese child is more likely to be an obese adult and develop high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, breathing problems, asthma, joint problems, fatty liver disease, depression, and behavioral problems.

Children who are overweight or obese as preschoolers are five times more likely to be overweight or obese as adults.

(More)

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(Page 2)

What can parents do?

- Plan meals for the week.
- Serve lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain foods.
- Cook meals as a family.
- Serve reasonably-sized portions.
- Drink lots of water and cut down on drinks with sugar.
- Be physically active daily as a family.
- Cut down on screen time.

Everyone can take action to impact their health and help reduce these rates by increasing opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating. Visit www.forwarddupage.org for recommendations for child care settings, healthcare facilities, municipalities, parents, schools, and worksites. Contact FORWARD for help getting started or for more details on the next steps.

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The full publication on obesity in DuPage County is available at www.dupagehealth.org/dupagebmi, and for additional health indicators in DuPage County, visit www.impactdupage.org.

FORWARD's goal is to implement change by identifying resources, harnessing expertise, promoting education, and advancing opportunities for lasting policy, system, and environmental change to reverse the obesity trend. For more tools and resources, visit www.forwarddupage.org or follow FORWARD on Twitter ([www.twitter.com/FORWARD_DuPage](https://twitter.com/FORWARD_DuPage)) or Facebook (www.facebook.com/forwarddupage).

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