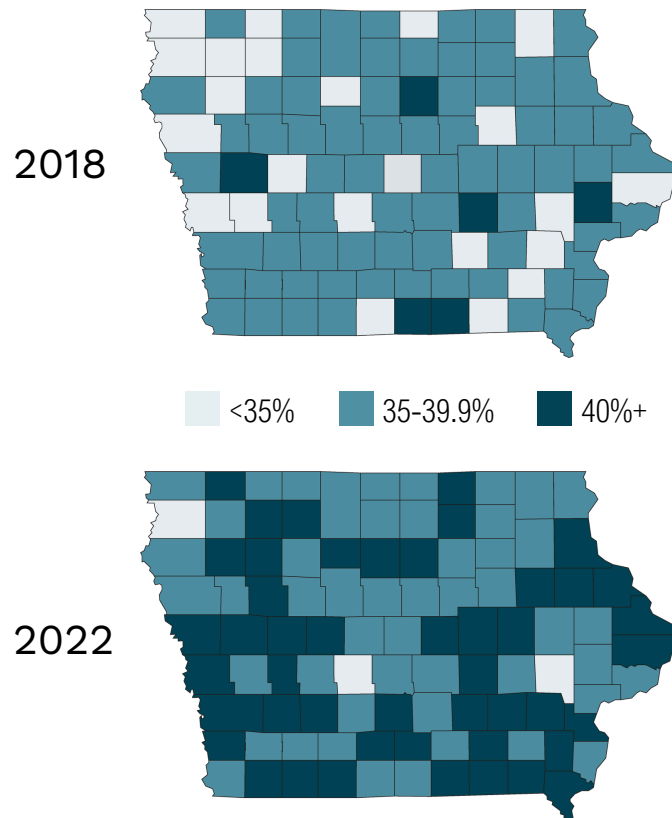


Obesity

Overweight and obesity status are determined by body mass index (BMI). A BMI over 25 is considered overweight and over 30 is considered obese. **Iowa ranks 7th highest in the nation for the number of women who are either overweight or obese at 68.3%.** In SFY24, 9.9% of the women enrolled with Medicaid were diagnosed with obesity.


Ten years ago, no state had an obesity prevalence above 35% for all adults (men and women). Today, 96 Iowa counties have a rate at or above 35%. Forty-seven counties have a rate at 40% or above.


Source: CDC PLACES 2022





Behaviors & Risk Factors

Some major modifiable risk factors include unhealthy eating patterns, lack of physical activity, stress and associated mental conditions, and lack of supportive environments and policies that increase access and affordability to healthy foods and safe physical activity.

 **42.2%** of women did not meet aerobic activity recommendations (150 minutes per week).
Iowa Rank: 24th Highest

 **12.7%** of women were unable to afford more food when needed in the past.
Iowa Rank: 23rd Highest

 **20.3%** of women report consuming vegetables less than one time per day.
Iowa Rank: 7th Highest

 **37%** of women report consuming fruits less than one time per day.
Iowa Rank: 30th Highest

Source: 2023 Iowa HHS BRFSS Findings Brief, 2021 Iowa HHS BRFSS Findings Brief

Overweight/Obesity and Chronic Disease

Compared with people of healthy weight, those with overweight or obesity are at greater risk for many diseases, including diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and at least 13 types of cancer, as well as having an elevated risk of death from all causes. (National Cancer Institute)

Impacts of Obesity During Pregnancy

Overweight or obese women before pregnancy face increased health risks, including preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, Cesarean delivery, and hypertension. Early prenatal care allows for screening and treatment of chronic conditions, as well as education on managing modifiable risk factors like smoking cessation and healthy weight gain during pregnancy.

Outcomes for Pregnant Women in 2023

Metric	Medicaid	Non-Medicaid	Iowa (All Births)	National (All Births)
Overweight/Obese/Extreme Obese Pre-Pregnancy BMI	64.3%	58.5%	60.9%	58.4%
Healthy Pre-Pregnancy BMI	32.6%	39.8%	36.8%	36.7%
Adequate Prenatal Care	78.9%	86.9%	83.6%	74.9% (2022)
Smoking Abstinence	89.7%	97.5%	94.3%	96.6%

Data Sources: 2023 CDC Wonder, Medicaid paid claims

Partnerships

Iowa HHS leads two statewide workgroups, Healthy Iowans and the Healthy Eating Active Living Partnership, aimed at improving healthy eating, physical activity, and food security. They implement strategic plans to combat obesity throughout life.

Healthy Iowans

Iowa HHS coordinates the Healthy Iowans State Health Improvement Plan. The Healthy Iowans Healthy Eating and Active Living workgroup is made up of both government and non-government organizations. The group focuses on strategies to create systems that make it easier for people to eat healthy and be active, working with other initiatives in the state to have an even bigger impact.

Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL)

The Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Partnership is a collaborative network focused on nutrition programming and projects. Led by Iowa HHS for 20 years, it aims to align nutrition education and obesity prevention while enhancing food and nutrition security. The HEAL Strategic Plan includes five goals that workgroups address through actionable policy, systems, and environmental change strategies.

What is HHS Doing?

Prevention:

- Administers Diabetes Prevention Program for pre-diabetic women.
- Promotes HEAL in the State Health Improvement Plan.
- Developing an HHS Obesity Prevention Strategy.
- Explores nutrition-related benefit programs, policies, and strategies to enhance weight and chronic disease outcomes.

Treatment:

- Provides nutrition counseling to women aged 60+ years old (115 women in SFY2024) and nutrition education to older adults (9,715 individuals in SFY2024) through work with Area Agencies on Aging.
- Educates women through Chronic Disease Self Management Program (reached 74 women in CY2024)
- Provides nutrition education to all prenatal and postpartum women enrolled in WIC (158,619 in FFY2024)
- Coordinated a value-added benefit pilot in 2024 allowing MCOs to provide access to food for 754 pregnant women and their families in 30 days.