

# WELLNESS Newsletter

This publication is brought to you by the District Wellness Council, which is dedicated to educating Rush-Henrietta families about important topics to keep your children healthy.

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## Obesity: A Growing Problem

According to the CDC, obesity is among the easiest medical conditions to recognize but most difficult to treat. Unhealthy weight gain due to poor diet and lack of exercise is responsible for more than 300,000 deaths each year.

Obesity is defined as an increase in body weight caused by an excess accumulation of body fat. It is not the same as being overweight, which means weighing too much.

A person may be overweight from extra muscle, bone, or water, as well as having too much stored fat. Both terms mean your weight is higher than what is thought to be healthy for your height.

The most common statistical measurement of obesity is the Body Mass Index. Body Mass Index (BMI) is calculated from a person's weight and height. BMI provides a reliable indicator of body fatness for most people and is used to screen for weight categories that may lead to health problems.

- Healthy weight 18-24
- Overweight: 25-27
- Obese: > 30
- Morbidly Obese: > 40

## Childhood Obesity: An Epidemic

The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that approximately 17 percent of children and adolescents are obese. Since 1980, obesity prevalence among children and adolescents has almost tripled. One in three children in Monroe County is at an unhealthy weight.

The weight status of a child is determined using an age- and sex-specific percentile for BMI rather than the BMI categories used for adults because the body composition of children varies as they age and varies between boys and girls.

Obesity is defined as a BMI at or above the 95th percentile for children of the same age and sex.

Last year, a study group formed consisting of the Rush-Henrietta elementary School Nurse Teachers. They chose to review and analyze collected data on the students to determine how prevalent obesity was in our district. They then compared that with both state and national statistics on obesity.

The study group learned that the data supports the increased need of health education in the area of nutrition and physical activity beginning with our youngest students.

## **Upcoming Events and Important Links**

### Flu Clinic Dates

10/17 Sperry High School, 3-5 p.m.  
10/18 Sherman Elementary School, 7-8:30 a.m.  
10/18 Transportation Center, 9:30-11:30 a.m.  
10/25 Roth Middle School, 3:30-5 p.m.  
10/26 Fyle Elementary School, 3-4:30 p.m.  
11/05 Vollmer Learning Center, 2:30-4 p.m.

### Family Health and Wellness Fair

Wednesday, March 6, 2013  
5 to 7:30 p.m.

### Important Links

#### CDC Obesity Epidemic

<http://www.cdc.gov/CDCTV/ObesityEpidemic>

#### New York State Obesity Prevention

<http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/obesity/index.htm>

#### Nutrition and Lifestyle Change

<http://www.beahealthyhero.org>

<http://www.fueluptoplay60.com>

#### School Nutrition

<http://www.traytalk.org>

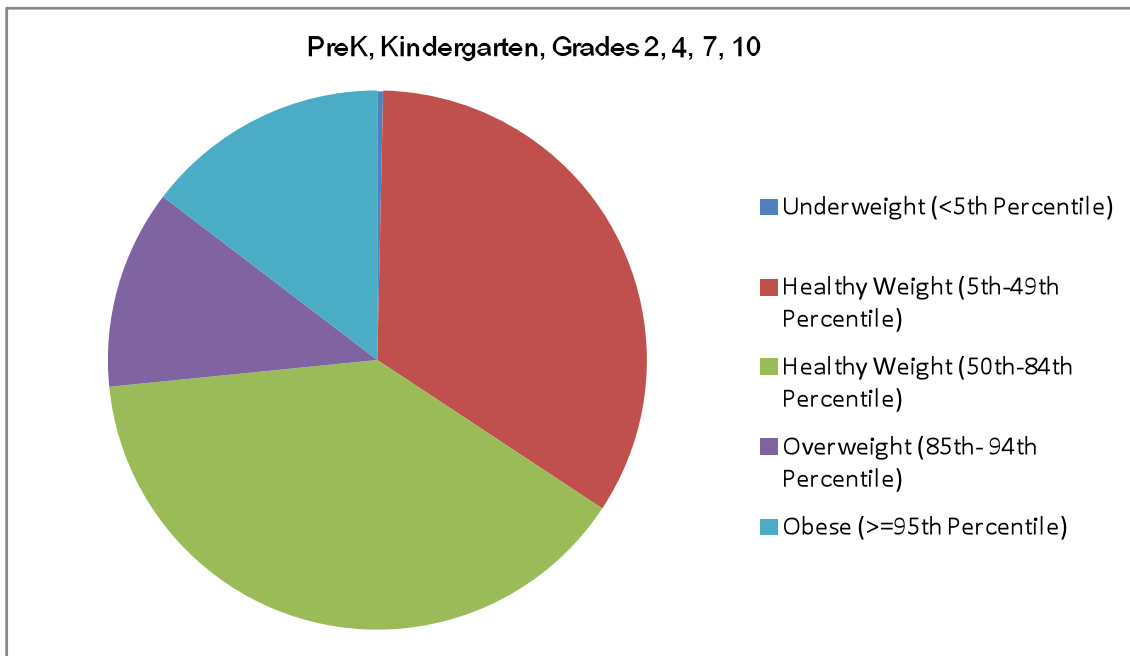
#### BMI App

<http://www.apps.usa.gov/bmi-app.shtml>

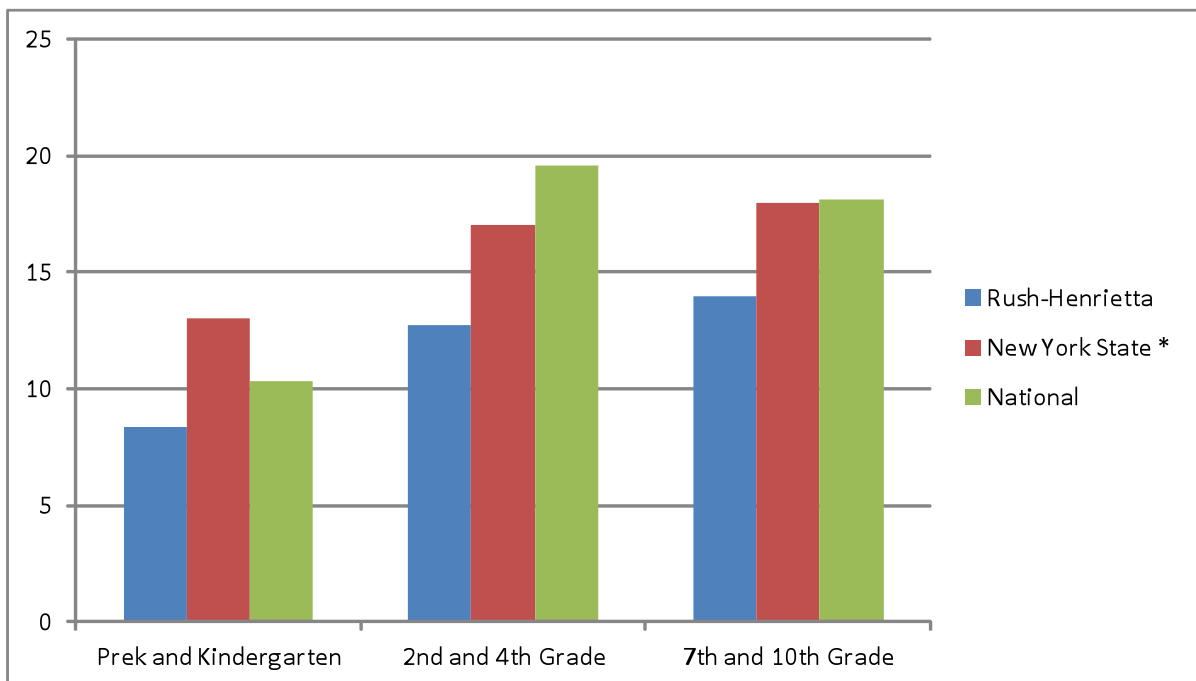
#### Research

<http://www.nccor.org>

## Student Weight Status Category Report Rush-Henrietta Central School District 2010-2011



## Obesity Comparison Report (Children with BMI-for-age at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or greater)



\*New York State exclusive of New York City

## Causes and Risk Factors

When children eat more than they need, their bodies store the extra calories in fat cells to use for energy later. If this pattern continues over time, and their bodies do not need this stored energy, they develop more fat cells and may develop obesity.

Infants and young children are very good at listening to signals of hunger and fullness from their body. They will stop eating as soon as their bodies tell them they have had enough.

But sometimes a well-meaning parent tells them they have to finish everything on their plate. This forces them to ignore their fullness and eat everything that is served to them.

Some people may use food to reward good behavior or provide comfort when sad. These learned habits lead to eating no matter if we are hungry or full. Many people have a very hard time breaking these habits.

The family, friends, schools, and community resources in the environment of a child reinforce lifestyle habits regarding diet and activity.

Children are surrounded by many things that make it easy to overeat and harder to be active. Watching television, gaming, texting, and playing on the computer are activities that require very little energy. They can take up a lot of time and replace physical activity. And, when children watch television, they often crave the unhealthy high-calorie snacks they see on commercials.

## Treatment and Support

The first step in helping your child get to a healthy weight is to consult with their health care provider. They can help to set healthy goals for weight-loss and help with monitoring and support.

Try to get the whole family to join a weight-loss plan, even if weight loss is not the goal for everyone. Weight-loss plans for children focus on healthy lifestyle habits. A healthy lifestyle is good for everyone.

Having support from friends and family may also help your child lose weight.

## Changing Your Child's Lifestyle

Eating a balanced diet means your child consumes the right types and amounts of foods and drinks to keep their body healthy.

- Know what size portions a child should eat to meet your body's needs for nutrients, without getting too much of some and not enough of others.
- Stock your pantry and refrigerator with healthy foods.
- Choose a variety of healthy foods from each of the food groups and eat foods from each group at every meal.
- Learn more about eating healthy and eating out.



## Health Risks

How can obesity affect our children? Children with obesity are at risk for developing the following health problems:

- High blood glucose (sugar) or diabetes
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- High blood cholesterol and triglycerides (dyslipidemia or high blood fats)
- Heart attacks due to coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, and stroke later in life
- Bone and joint problems; more weight puts pressure on the bones and joints. This leads to osteoarthritis, a disease that causes joint pain and stiffness.
- Stopping breathing during sleep (sleep apnea). This causes daytime fatigue or sleepiness, poor attention, and problems at school.

## **Improving School Nutrition**

This year, based on new standards from the federal government, our food service department has made several changes that will help ensure your child is making more nutritionally sound food choices at school. There is a wider variety of healthier fruits and vegetables offered, and more beans and legumes are being added to the menu. Every child now needs to choose both one fruit and one vegetable per meal. Other changes that are being implemented are:

- Increase in whole grain foods
- Decrease in trans fat used
- Only 1 percent or fat-free milk
- Limiting sodium

These goals reinforce our commitment to nutrition and that healthy children do better in school!



## **Active Kids are Healthy Kids**

Encouraging your child to move their bodies for at least an hour a day is recommended. There are a variety of ways that children can be active. Walking, dancing, biking, swimming are just a few. Supporting them in sports and recreation programs will also improve that they are making lifelong healthy choices.

5210 Healthy Hero and Fuel Up to Play 60 are some national programs aimed to improve the health of children. The local recreation centers, dance studios and fitness facilities offer many programs for both children and families.

