

Condition Snapshot

Obesity

Obesity is more than a number on a scale – it’s a complex and costly epidemic. See how a whole-person approach may help employees achieve sustainable weight loss and reduce long-term health risks.



Definition

- Body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher

Trend

- Prevalence among U.S. adults doubled between 1990–2021¹

Causes²

- Lack or limited amount of physical activity
- Eating more processed foods/sugar
- Genetics
- Social drivers of health (SDOH)

≈ 100M+

U.S. adults are living with obesity¹

“Obesity is the apex predator of human health and well-being, and the #1 health risk in this nation.”

Dr. Rhonda Randall

Chief Medical Officer, UnitedHealthcare Employer & Individual

Taking a heavy toll

From musculoskeletal conditions and mental health to productivity at work, obesity has major impacts on employees and employers.

Who

Most common among:³



Males



Baby Boomers
(born between 1946–1964)

Most prevalent in:⁴

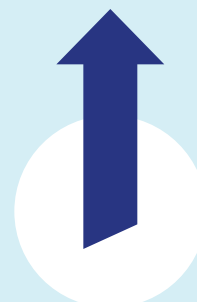
- 1 West Virginia – 41.2%**
- 2 Mississippi – 40.1%**
- 3 Arkansas – 40.0%**
- 4 Louisiana – 39.9%**
- 5 Alabama – 39.2%**

[Find your state →](#)

How

Increases risks of:⁵

- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure and high cholesterol (risk factors for heart disease)
- Stroke
- Musculoskeletal issues
- Many types of cancer
- Depression and anxiety



How much

\$714

average cost per member,
per month for employers¹

\$117

average out-of-pocket cost
to members per month²

\$4.3B

in productivity losses
each year from obesity-related
absenteeism³

Strategies for employers

Employers that take a whole-person approach to their benefits – for instance, by offering access to resources on healthier living and activities – may be able to better support employees living with obesity, as well as those hoping to avoid it.



Understand your population: Claims data can reveal the impact that obesity may be having on your workforce and why – including common comorbid health conditions and any SDOH challenges – to help inform health benefits design.



Offer weight-management programs: Some programs, such as Total Weight Support from UnitedHealthcare, are designed to work alongside drugs like **GLP-1s** to help employees achieve better outcomes and give employers a higher ROI.



Include Centers of Excellence (COE) in your network: For good candidates for bariatric surgery, Bariatric Resource Services provides quality, cost-effective care from designated COEs.



Walk the talk: Offer healthier, nonprocessed foods at meetings, events, on-site cafeterias and vending machines, and make it easier for employees to engage in physical activity by encouraging walking meetings or offering an on-site fitness center.



Educate your workforce: Share resources and tips on topics like exercise, nutrition, quality sleep and more.



Incentivize healthier choices: With programs like **UnitedHealthcare Rewards**, employees can earn rewards for walking, cycling, tracking sleep and more.

**Learn how UnitedHealthcare supports
a whole-person health approach >**



¹ Obesity and Severe Obesity Prevalence in Adults: United States, August 2021–August 2023. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Sept. 24, 2024. Available: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db508.htm>.

² Three-Quarters of U.S. Adults Are Now Overweight or Obese. New York Times, Nov. 14, 2024. Available: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/14/well/obesity-epidemic-america.html>.

³ UnitedHealthcare book of business, 2024.

⁴ Obesity in United States. America's Health Rankings, 2025. Available: <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/obesity>.

⁵ Consequences of obesity. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, July 15, 2022. Available: <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/basics/consequences.html>. Accessed: May 4, 2025.

⁶ Mapped: The most (and least) overweight US cities in 2025. Advisory Board, March 19, 2025. Available: <https://www.advisory.com/daily-briefing/2025/03/19/overweight-cities>.

UnitedHealthcare Rewards is a voluntary program. The information provided under this program is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to be nor should be construed as medical advice. You should consult an appropriate health care professional before beginning any exercise program and/or to determine what may be right for you. Receiving an activity tracker, certain credits and/or rewards and/or purchasing an activity tracker with earnings may have tax implications. You should consult with an appropriate tax professional to determine if you have any tax obligations under this program, as applicable. If any fraudulent activity is detected (e.g., misrepresented physical activity), you may be suspended and/or terminated from the program. If you are unable to meet a standard related to health factor to receive a reward under this program, you might qualify for an opportunity to receive the reward by different means. You may call us toll-free at 1-866-230-2505 or at the number on your health plan ID card, and we will work with you (and, if necessary, your doctor) to find another way for you to earn the same reward. Rewards may be limited due to incentive limits under applicable law. Components subject to change. This program is not available for fully insured members in Hawaii, Vermont and Puerto Rico nor available to level funded members in District of Columbia, Hawaii, Vermont and Puerto Rico.

The Centers of Excellence (COE) program providers and medical centers are independent contractors who render care and treatment to health plan members. The COE program does not provide direct health care services or practice medicine, and the COE providers and medical centers are solely responsible for medical judgments and related treatments. The COE program is not liable for any act or omission, including negligence, committed by any independent contracted health care professional or medical center.

Employee benefits including group health plan benefits may be taxable benefits unless they fit into specific exception categories. Please consult with your tax specialist to determine taxability of these offerings.

Insurance coverage provided by or through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or its affiliates. Administrative services provided by United HealthCare Services, Inc. or their affiliates.