Spring 2007
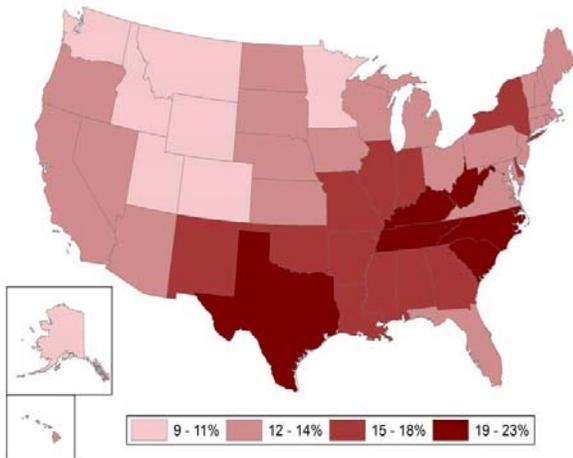
Overweight and Physical Inactivity among Rural Children Aged 10-17
A National and State Portrait

Proportion of Children Classified as
Obese, by State

9 - 11%   12 - 14%   15 - 18%   19 - 23%

Overweight and obesity

In 2003, 31.5% of rural children aged 10-17 years old were overweight or obese,[1] as were 30.4% of urban children.

Rural children (16.5%) were more likely to be obese than urban children (14.4%).

Obesity rates were higher among rural minority children than among whites: 26.3% of African American, 23.1% of Hispanic, and 20.3% of other race children were obese, versus 14.5% of whites.

Physical Activity

Rural children aged 10-17 years old were less likely to be physically inactive than urban children. 25.4% rural children, versus 29.3% of urban children, failed to take part in moderate to vigorous exercises for at least 20 minutes, three or more days per week.

Rural children living in the Midwest were more likely to be physically inactive (26.1%), followed by the South (26.0%), the Northeast (23.7%) and the West (23.5%).

Weight-Related Health Behaviors

More than two out of five children (40.7% of rural children and 41.3% of urban children) did not participate in any after school sport teams or lessons in 2003.

Nearly half of the children (48.0% of rural and 47.0% of urban) aged 10-17 years spent at least two hours a day with electronic entertainment media (such as non-educational computer use, playing video games, and watching television).

Rural parents were less likely to perceive their neighborhood as unsafe for children (20.1% of rural parents versus 25.7% of urban parents).

[1] Children were classified as "overweight" if their body mass index (a ratio of height to weight) exceeded the 85th percentile for their age. Children were classifed as "obese" if their body mass index exceeded the 95th percentile for their age.
A full copy of the report can be obtained from the SC Rural Health Research Center at
http://rhr.sph.sc.edu

South Carolina
**Rural Health
Research Center**   *At the Heart of Public Health Policy*

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA