

Obesity in India

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Obesity in India: A Public Health Crisis

Context

Obesity is rising rapidly in India due to **urbanization, sedentary lifestyles, and unhealthy diets**. In his **Mann Ki Baat** address, **PM Narendra Modi** highlighted that **1 in 8 Indians** is obese and urged people to **reduce oil consumption by 10%** monthly. With **increasing non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**, tackling obesity is crucial for a healthier nation.

Rising Obesity Trends

- **Overweight/obese women:** 20.6% (2015-16) → 24% (2019-21).
 - **Overweight/obese men:** 18.9% → 22.9% (same period).
 - **Urban areas** report **higher obesity rates** than rural.
 - **Childhood obesity:** 2.1% (2015-16) → 3.4% (2019-21).
 - By 2030, **10.81%** of children (5-9 years) and **6.23%** of adolescents (10-19 years) will be obese.
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Health Risks of Obesity

- **Cardiovascular diseases:** Occur **10 years earlier** in India.
 - **Diabetes:** India has **101 million cases**.
 - **Cancer:** **14.6 lakh cases (2022) → 15.7 lakh (2025)** (ICMR).
 - **Osteoarthritis:** Excess weight damages joints.
 - **Mental health issues:** Leads to **stigma, bullying, and depression**.
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Causes of Rising Obesity

1. **Unhealthy Diets** - High intake of **processed and high-calorie foods**.
2. **Economic Barriers** - Nutrient-rich foods are **expensive**, leading to **carbohydrate-heavy diets**.
3. **Lack of Physical Activity** - **50% of Indians** do not meet exercise recommendations.
4. **Environmental Factors** - **Air pollution and lack of green spaces** discourage physical activity.

Government Initiatives

- **Poshan Abhiyaan** – Improves **maternal and child nutrition**.
 - **Fit India Movement** – Encourages **active lifestyles**.
 - **Eat Right India** – Reduces **unhealthy food consumption**.
 - **NPCDCS** – Focuses on **preventing NCDs linked to obesity**.
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Way Forward

- **Tax ultra-processed foods** and improve **food labeling**.
 - **Promote physical activity** through better **urban planning**.
 - **Make healthy food affordable** via **PDS reforms**.
 - **Increase public awareness** through **media campaigns**.
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Conclusion

Obesity is a **national health crisis**, increasing **NCD burden and healthcare costs**. A **multi-sectoral approach** involving **policy reforms, health awareness, and lifestyle changes** is crucial to curb this growing epidemic.



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