

# Obesity and Cancer In West Virginia



## Obesity-Associated Cancers

### Quick Facts

- Between 2015-2019, the most common obesity associated cancers in West Virginia were post-menopausal breast (6,532), colon and rectum (5,647), and kidney and renal pelvis (2,456).<sup>4</sup>
- Between 2011 to 2021, the prevalence of obesity in West Virginia has increased from 31.9% to 40.7%, a 27.6% increase.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2021:
  - The prevalence of obesity in West Virginia was 40.7%, which was the highest prevalence in the nation (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup>
  - Prevalence of obesity in West Virginia was highest in Black women (47.1%), followed by White women (41.9%), White males (39.7%), and Black males (37.0%).<sup>4</sup>

## Obesity and Cancer

Obesity is a chronic health problem defined by an unhealthy amount and/or distribution of body fat in people. Compared to individuals at a healthy body weight, obese or overweight individuals have a greater risk of developing certain diseases, like diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and stroke.<sup>1</sup> Obesity has also been linked with a higher risk of developing 13 different cancers (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup>

To determine if a person is obese, doctors utilize 'body mass index', or BMI, which is based on the person's weight and height. BMI is used often in research to help understand how weight is related to cancer, but it does not predict future outcomes.<sup>2</sup> The standard weight categories based on BMI for adults (20 years and older) and children (19 years and younger) are shown below. Ultimately, eating well and being physically active are the optimal ways to improve health in those that are overweight or obese.

### 20 Years and Older

Adult BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	Classification
<18.5	Underweight
18.5 - 24.9	Healthy
25.0 - 29.9	Overweight
30.0 - 39.9	Obese
40.0+	Severely Obese

### 19 Years and Younger

Adult BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	Classification
Less than the 5th percentile	Underweight
5th percentile to less than the 85th percentile	Healthy
85th to less than 95th percentile	Overweight
Equal to or greater than the 95th percentile	Obese
Equal to or greater than 120% of the 95th percentile	Severely Obese

For more information, please contact the West Virginia Cancer Registry.

[oepe.wv.gov/cancer](https://oepe.wv.gov/cancer)

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# Obesity and Cancer in West Virginia

Figure 1: Obesity Associated Cancers

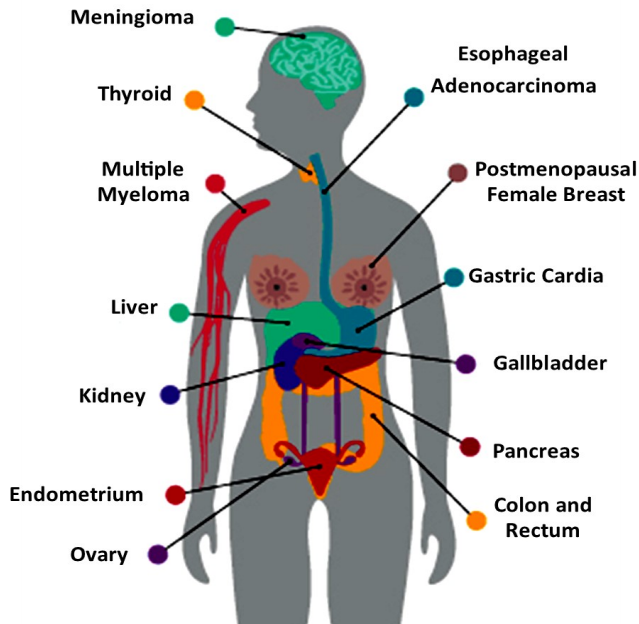


Figure 2: Obesity Prevalence in Adults aged 18+ years (percentage, Age-Adjusted Prevalence), BRFSS 2021, All Races and Ethnicities, Male and Female, West Virginia and United States

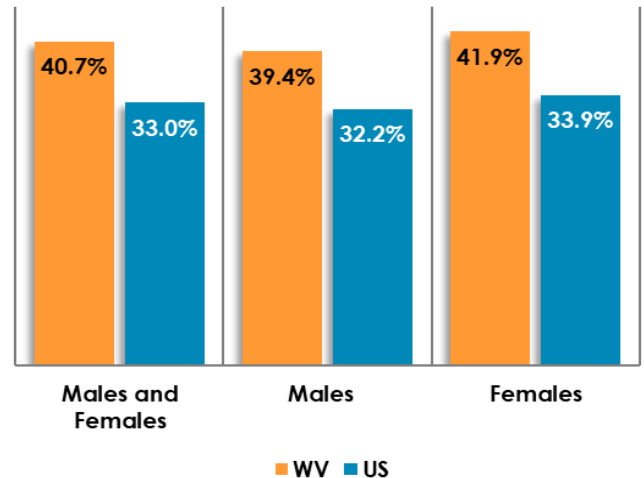
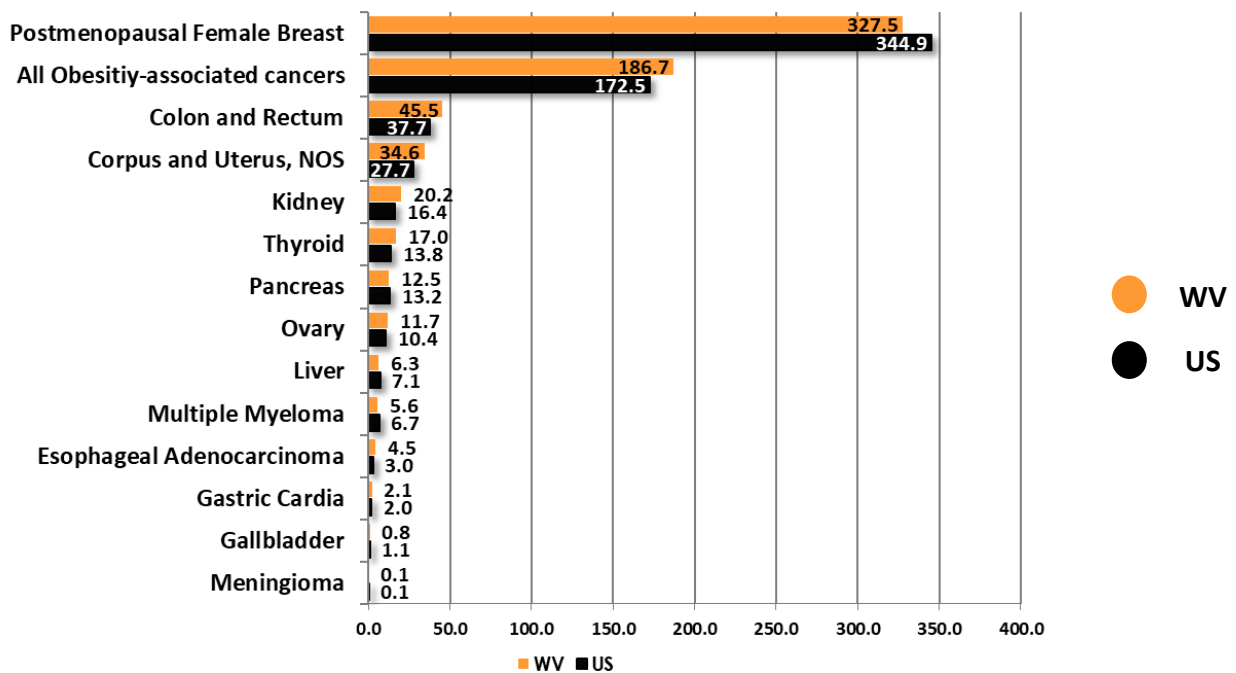


Figure 3: Average Annual Age-Adjusted Incidence Rates (per 100,000) Obesity-Associated Cancers, Males and Females, West Virginia and United States, 2015-2019<sup>4</sup>



References:

- 1) National Institutes of Health. Obesity and Cancer. <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/obesity/obesity-fact-sheet>. Accessed May 2023
- 2) American Society of Clinical Oncology. Body Weight and Cancer Risk. <https://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/prevention-and-healthy-living/body-weight-and-cancer-risk>. Accessed May 2023
- 3) U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group. U.S. Cancer Statistics Data Visualizations Tool, based on 2021 submission data (1999-2019): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Cancer Institute; [www.cdc.gov/cancer/dataviz](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dataviz), released in June 2022.
- 4) West Virginia Cancer Registry
- 5) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data [online]. 2015. [accessed Jun 01, 2023]. URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/>.