



# HEALTH STATISTICS RELATED TO CALIFORNIANS AND THE WORKPLACE

California has had one of the fastest rates of increase in obesity among working-age adults in the nation.<sup>1</sup>

## Overweight and Obesity

- Surgeon General Richard Carmona stated that obesity is the fastest growing cause of illness and death in America today.<sup>2</sup>
- Well over half of California's adults are overweight or obese.<sup>3</sup>
- The longer people are overweight and the more overweight they are, the greater their risk of type 2 diabetes.<sup>4</sup>

## Chronic Disease

- Improving dietary practices and physical activity are major strategies for preventing many of the most common chronic diseases, such as heart disease, cancer, and type 2 diabetes.<sup>5</sup>
- Poor diet, obesity, and physical inactivity may be responsible for one out of every three cancer deaths, just as many as smoking.<sup>6</sup>

- Fruit and vegetable consumption is associated with a reduced risk of developing heart disease, some cancers, and type 2 diabetes.<sup>7, 8, 9, 10</sup>
- Regular physical activity that is performed on most days of the week reduces the risk of dying prematurely from heart disease and of developing high blood pressure.<sup>11</sup>

## Cost of Chronic Disease

- A study estimated that physical inactivity, obesity, and overweight cost California \$21.7 billion in direct and indirect medical care, workers' compensation, and lost productivity costs in the year 2000. These costs were projected to rise to more than \$28 billion in 2005.<sup>12</sup>
- More than 75 percent of medical care costs are attributable to chronic diseases, which in large part are preventable.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2004). *Prevalence of obesity among U.S. adults by state: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (1991-2001); Self-reported data*. Retrieved May 12, 2005, from [http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/trend/prev\\_reg.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/trend/prev_reg.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Carmona, R. H. (2003). *Remarks to the 2003 California Childhood Obesity Conference, Monday, January 6, 2003*. Retrieved December 27, 2004 from <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/news/speeches/califobesity.htm>

<sup>3</sup> *Behavioral Risk Factor Survey: 2002* [Data file]. Sacramento, CA: Survey Research Group, Cancer Surveillance Section, California Department of Health Services.

<sup>4</sup> International Diabetes Center. *Risk factors*. Retrieved May 13, 2005, from <http://www.parknicollet.com/diabetes/aboutdiabetes/riskfactors.html>

<sup>5</sup> U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2003). *Prevention makes common "cents."* Retrieved December 27, 2004, from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/prevention/>

<sup>6</sup> American Cancer Society, California Division & Public Health Institute, California Cancer Registry. (2002). *California cancer facts and figures 2003*. Oakland, CA: American Cancer Society, California Division.

<sup>7</sup> U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2000). *Healthy people 2010: Understanding and improving health, 2nd ed.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<sup>8</sup> Ness, A. R., & Powles, J. W. (1997). Fruit and vegetables, and cardiovascular disease: a review. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 26, 1-13.

## Diet

- According to the 2003 California Dietary Practices Survey, California adults consume an average of only 4.1 daily servings of fruits and vegetables, which is well below the 3½ to 6½ cups that are recommended for good health. This survey also showed that 60 percent of all Californians agreed that fruits and vegetables were hard to get at work.<sup>14</sup>
- Without access to fruits and vegetables on the job, a working adult would have to eat 1 to 2 cups of fruits or vegetables every waking hour after work in order to meet the recommendation of 3½ to 6½ cups daily.<sup>15</sup>

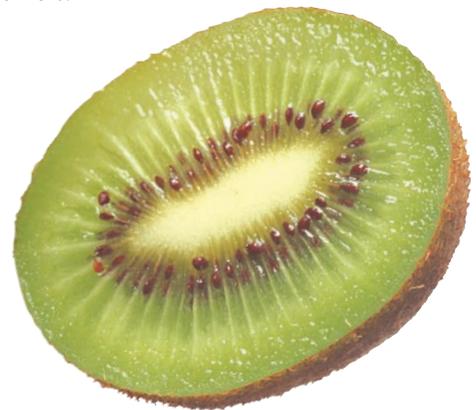
## Physical Activity

- Only 36 percent of California adults engage in 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity at least five days a week.<sup>16</sup>
- In order to manage the 10,000 steps a day recommended by walking advocates,<sup>17</sup> workers who remain sedentary during their workday would have to spend most of their evenings in motion.



## Health Promotion at Worksites

- Worksites are a viable place to promote fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity, because 70 percent of working-age Californians are currently employed.<sup>18</sup>
- A special emphasis on reaching certain ethnic groups, such as African Americans and Latinos, and low-income employees is necessary since health risks are disproportionately high among these audiences and worksite wellness programs often focus on higher wage earners.<sup>7</sup>



For more information, contact Dona Francis ([dfrancis@dhs.ca.gov](mailto:dfrancis@dhs.ca.gov)) with the *California 5 a Day—Be Active! Worksite Program*.

<sup>9</sup> Frazão, E. (1999). High costs of poor eating patterns in the United States. In E. Frazão (Ed.), *America's eating habits: Changes and consequences* (pp. 5-32). Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Food and Rural Economics Division. Retrieved May 13, 2005, from <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aib750/>

<sup>10</sup> Produce for Better Health Foundation. (2002). *The health benefits of fruits and vegetables, a scientific overview for health professionals*. Retrieved May 13, 2005, from [http://www.5aday.com/pdfs/research/health\\_benefits.pdf](http://www.5aday.com/pdfs/research/health_benefits.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1996). *Physical activity and health: A report of the surgeon general*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

<sup>12</sup> Chenoweth, D. (2005). *The economic costs of physical inactivity, obesity, and overweight in California adults during the year 2000: A technical analysis*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Health Services, Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section and Epidemiology and Health Promotion Section.

<sup>13</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2004). *Chronic disease overview*. Retrieved December 27, 2004, from <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/overview.htm>

<sup>14</sup> *California Dietary Practices Survey: 2003* [Data file]. Sacramento, CA: Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section, California Department of Health Services.

<sup>15</sup> U. S. Department of Health and Human Services & U. S. Department of Agriculture. (2005). *Dietary guidelines for Americans, 2005*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office Retrieved May 13, 2005, from <http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/>

<sup>16</sup> *Behavioral Risk Factor Survey: 2001* [Data file]. Sacramento, CA: Survey Research Group, Cancer Surveillance Section, California Department of Health Services.

<sup>17</sup> Fenton, M. (2003). *Walking for fitness*. Retrieved December 30, 2004, from <http://www.emedicinehealth.com/articles/25907-1.asp>

<sup>18</sup> University of California, San Francisco Institute for Health Policy Studies. (1999). *Who succeeds and who fails in the new world of work*. Retrieved December 27, 2004, from <http://medicine.ucsf.edu/programs/cwhs/1999/dayone/report.html>