

Obesity-Linked Cancer Deaths Tripled Since 1999

Cancer deaths related to obesity increased significantly among women, older adults, Native Americans and Black Americans.

July 23, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

Over the past two decades, obesity-related cancer [deaths](#) have tripled in the United States, according to [a study](#) presented at ENDO 2025, the Endocrine Society's annual meeting.

[Obesity](#) is a significant health concern affecting more than 40% of U.S. adults, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Obesity can increase the risk of several [chronic conditions](#), including type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, high cholesterol and more. It has also been linked to a [higher risk](#) of developing 13 types of cancer: esophageal, breast, colon, uterine, gallbladder, stomach, kidney, liver, ovarian, pancreatic, thyroid, multiple myeloma and brain cancers. These cancers make up 40% of all [diagnosed cancers](#) in the United States each year, according to the release.

For the study, researchers examined 33,572 deaths resulting from obesity-associated cancers between 1999 and 2020.

During that period, mortality rates increased from 3.7 deaths per million to 13.5 deaths per million, with significant increases among women, older adults, Native Americans, Black Americans and residents of [rural areas](#).

The Midwest had the highest rate of obesity-related cancer deaths at nearly 8 per million, while the Northeast had the lowest at under 6 per million. State-level analysis showed that Vermont, Minnesota and Oklahoma had the highest rates, and Utah, Alabama and Virginia had the lowest.

“Obesity is a significant risk factor for multiple cancers, contributing to significant mortality,” said

lead researcher Faizan Ahmed, MD, of Hackensack Meridian Jersey Shore University Medical Center in Neptune City, New Jersey, according to the release. “This research underscores the need for targeted public health strategies, such as [early screening](#) and improved [access to care](#), especially in high-risk rural and underserved areas.”

To read more, click [#Obesity](#). There, you’ll see headlines such as “[Weight-Loss Meds Reduce Risk of Obesity-Related Cancers](#),” “[Uterine Cancer Rates Projected to Rise by 2050, Especially Among Black Women](#)” and “[Healthy Nutrition and Physical Lifestyle Choices Lower Cancer Mortality Risk for Survivors](#).”

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