

Dramatic Increase In Obesity-Related Diabetes

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ATLANTA (Reuters Health) - Perhaps because of widespread obesity in the US, diabetes has increased dramatically over the past decade, a new nationwide study has found. Between 1990 and 1998, diabetes increased by 70% among individuals aged 30 to 39, by 40% among those aged 40 to 49, and by 31% among those aged 50 to 59, the findings indicate. Diabetes increased across all regions, demographic groups and nearly all states, according to the researchers.

"We were not really surprised at what we found," said Dr. Ali H. Mokdad, one of the study authors and visiting scientist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity. "Given the spread of obesity across the country and knowing that diabetes is strongly associated with obesity, we expected this to be the case," he told Reuters Health.

The findings were published by researchers from the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the September issue of Diabetes Care. The data came from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, a standardized telephone survey conducted by state health agencies in collaboration with the CDC.

"Those who have diabetes should stay in touch with their physicians to prevent complications," Mokdad advised. "In terms of prevention and control of diabetes, we would like people to be more physically active and eat a proper diet," he said.

"Diabetes is a disease that we can prevent--we have the knowledge to do so. Basically, it is to do with lifestyle and environment," Mokdad said. "We need to cut down on what we eat and exercise regularly."