



CBS NEWS POLL
 For release: January 7, 2010
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WHERE AMERICA STANDS: FIGHTING OBESITY
December 17 - 22, 2009

Most Americans consider obesity to be a serious public health problem, and few award the country a high grade on its efforts to fight obesity. While a junk food tax is not viewed as an effective way to encourage people to lose weight, nine in ten Americans think obesity is controllable through diet and exercise.

Few Americans, just one in five, give the country an A or B when it comes to making efforts to combat obesity, including just 2% that gives the top grade of an A. Twice as many give the country a grade of D or even F.

Women are more likely than men to give the country a good grade, but still just 3% of them award an A on this measure. 46% of men give a grade of D or F.

GRADE ON MAKING EFFORTS TO COMBAT OBESITY

	All	Men	Women
A	2%	1%	3%
B	18	13	22
C	35	35	34
D	27	30	24
F	14	16	13

THE PUBLIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVE

Nearly all Americans view obesity as a serious public health problem, and more than half think it is a very serious one. Women are more likely than men to see obesity as a very serious problem.

HOW SERIOUS A PROBLEM IS OBESITY?

	All	Men	Women
Very serious	57%	47%	66%
Somewhat serious	38	44	32
Not very/not at all serious	5	8	1

And this is a problem that Americans see as solvable. Nearly nine in ten Americans think obesity can be controlled by diet and exercise; just 7% think obesity is something people cannot control.

IS OBESITY SOMETHING PEOPLE CAN CONTROL?

Yes	89%
No	7

But most (60%) oppose a tax on junk food -- things like soda, chips and candy -- and just 38% favor that.

TAX ON JUNK FOOD

Favor	38%
Oppose	60

Moreover, 72% of Americans think such a tax would not encourage more people to lose weight.

WOULD TAX ON JUNK FOOD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO LOSE WEIGHT?

Yes	26%
No	72

Those who would like to lose weight themselves are most apt to say that a junk food tax would not encourage people to lose weight.

FEELINGS ABOUT THEIR OWN WEIGHT

Most Americans -- 55% -- say they would like to lose weight. Just 5% want to gain weight, and 40% want to stay at their current weight. Women are more likely than men to say they want to lose weight.

FEELINGS ABOUT OWN WEIGHT

	All	Men	Women
Would like to lose weight	55%	47%	62%
Would like to stay at current weight	40	45	36
Would like to gain weight	5	8	2

Gallup has asked Americans about their own weight for many years, and since 1990, a majority has said they would like to lose weight. But in Gallup polls conducted in the 1950s, about half of Americans wanted to stay at their current weight, and just about a third wanted to lose weight.

FEELINGS ABOUT OWN WEIGHT

	Now	11/2005	11/2001	2/1996	10/1990	8/1957	4/1951	
	CBS	***** Gallup *****						
Lose weight	55%	60%	59%	55%	52%	36%	31%	
Stay at current	40	32	34	41	40	51	50	
Gain weight	5	8	7	4	7	11	17	

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1,048 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone December 17-22, 2009. Phone numbers were dialed from random digit dial samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher.

This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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q17 Using a grading scale of A, B, C, D, and F, where A is excellent and F is very poor and using any of the grades in between how would you grade the U.S. on making efforts to combat obesity in this country?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **		
	Total	Men	Women
	%	%	%
A	2	1	3
B	18	13	22
C	35	35	34
D	27	30	24
F	14	16	13
DK/NA	4	5	4

q30 Which comes closer to your view about obesity -- obesity is mostly something that can be controlled with diet and exercise, or obesity is mostly something that cannot be controlled?

Can control	89	90	89
Cannot control	7	7	7
DK/NA	4	3	4

q31 Please tell me how serious a public health problem you think obesity is, that is, people being seriously overweight in this country-- is it very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious or not at all serious?

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				%
Very serious	57	47	66	55
Somewhat serious	38	44	32	38
Not very serious	4	7	1	5
Not at all serious	1	1	0	2
Don't know/No answer	0	1	1	0

q33 Would you like to lose weight, stay at your present weight, or put on weight?

Lose weight	55	47	62
Stay at present	40	45	36
Put on weight	5	8	2
No opinion	0	0	0
*Gallup trend			

q35 Do you support or oppose putting a special tax on junk food -- that is things like soda, chips, and candy?

Favor	38	33	42
Oppose	60	66	54
DK/NA	2	1	4

q36 Do you think putting a special tax on junk food would encourage more people to lose weight, or wouldn't it do that?

** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **

*** GENDER ***

	Total	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Would	26	23	28
Would not	72	74	70
DK/NA	2	3	2

	<u>Unweighted</u>	<u>Weighted</u>	<u>Margin of error</u>
Total Respondents	1048		3 pts.
Total Men	442	493	5 pts.
Total Women	606	555	4 pts.