

## PRESS RELEASE

February 20, 2025

### World Obesity Day takes place on Tuesday, March 4

World Obesity Day Europe, held each year to draw attention to Europe's growing obesity epidemic and the need for better prevention and treatment, will take place on Tuesday, March 4.

The campaign, part of the global World Obesity Day, is an initiative of the European Coalition for People Living with Obesity (ECPO). People from all walks of life will participate to create greater awareness and understanding of obesity as a chronic, relapsing disease.

This year, several associated patient organisations, including those for cardiovascular disease (CVD), diabetes, liver disease, and chronic kidney disease (CKD), will also be taking part to draw attention to obesity as a gateway to those diseases as well as at least 13 types of cancer.

It is estimated that 213 million people in the World Health Organization (WHO) European Region are now living with obesity, and a further 255 million are living with overweight. Together, this amounts to more than 66% of the adult population.<sup>1</sup>

Without significant intervention, it is estimated that by 2035, more than 77% of the adult population in the region will be living with overweight or obesity (263 million living with obesity and 246 million living with overweight).

Within the umbrella theme, Addressing Obesity Together, participants will organise events ranging from training workshops for patients and healthcare professionals to the launch in several countries of locally translated versions of the best-selling children's book "Mum, What is Obesity". The book has already been distributed to several thousand schools.

Other initiatives include free health check-ups, healthy eating advice and open days at hospitals and treatment centres.

More ...

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<sup>1</sup> World Obesity Federation Obesity Atlas 2024: <https://data.worldobesity.org/publications/WOF-Obesity-Atlas-v7.pdf>

"In line with a global World Obesity Day focus on Changing Systems, Healthier Lives, our multidisciplinary group of stakeholders, including patient leaders and advocates across the community of European health professionals, are working to lead policy changes at regional, national and local levels to build the robust support systems for the future," says ECPO President Diana Castillo.

Among international initiatives taking place on March 4 will be a discussion in the European Parliament in Brussels, *Gateway to Better Health: The case for coordinated EU action on obesity*. Vicki Mooney and Susie Birney, will be speaking at the event on behalf of ECPO. It is being hosted by MEP Laurent Castillo and organised by the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO).

Details of the numerous World Obesity Day Europe events will be publicised extensively on social media @ObesityDayEU and #WODEurope. More information is available on the World Obesity Day Europe website: [www.woday.eu](http://www.woday.eu).

The ECPO image bank of photographs continues to be expanded and updated in collaboration with more than 30 patient organisations across European countries.

The image bank has been created to help change people's attitudes to overweight and obesity. It consists of more than 600 professionally taken photographs to support editors in selecting less stigmatising images for online use and in newspapers and magazines.

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#### **Note to editors:**

For additional statistics on Obesity in Europe and global statistics for some of the many NCDs that obesity can cause or lead to an increased risk, please see the figures attached.

**For further information**, please contact Tim Edgar ([tim@euroobesity.org](mailto:tim@euroobesity.org)) or Vicki Mooney ([vicki@euroobesity.org](mailto:vicki@euroobesity.org)) Tel: +34 687391566 .

For further information on World Obesity Day Europe, please see <https://woday.eu/>; and on ECPO <https://euroobesity.org/>

The following hashtags are used on social media: #WODEurope, #WorldObesityDay, and #AddressingObesityTogether.

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# World Obesity Day in Numbers

Reference: *World Obesity Federation Obesity Atlas 2024*

There are an estimated **213 million adults** in the WHO European Region currently (2025) living with obesity, and a further **255 million** who are living with overweight. Together this amounts to more than **66%** of the adult population.

Assuming no significant interventions, it is estimated that **by 2035** more than **77%** of the adult population will be living with overweight or obesity (**263 million** living with obesity and **246 million** living with overweight).

The number of **children** (aged 5-19 years) in the WHO European Region living with obesity in 2025 is estimated to be nearly **95 million**. A further **104 million** are living with overweight.

Assuming no significant interventions, the number of children living with obesity is expected to have risen to **156 million** in 2035 and the number of children living with overweight to more than **125 million**. This means that around **40%** of children in Europe will be living with overweight or obesity.

Globally, it is estimated that more than **1.01 billion** adults are living with obesity and **1.52 billion** are living with overweight in 2025. Together this represents **46%** of the world's adult population.

The number of children currently living with obesity is estimated to be **240 million** and a further **310 million** are living with overweight.

Assuming no significant interventions, it is estimated that **by 2035** more than **54%** of the global adult population will be living with overweight or obesity (**1.53 billion** living with obesity and **1.77 billion** living with overweight)

Assuming no significant interventions, the number of children living with obesity is expected to have risen to **380 million** in **2035** and the number of children living with overweight to more than **390 million**. This means that around **39%** of children in the world will be living with overweight or obesity.

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## **Obesity is a chronic, complex disease that can cause or lead to an increased risk of many other non-communicable diseases (NCDs).**

Among them are many cardiovascular-renal-metabolic diseases that are highly prevalent worldwide:

**~508 million people** live with **Type 2 Diabetes (T2D)**<sup>2</sup># Type 2 diabetes happens when your body can't use insulin properly. Without treatment, Type 2 diabetes can cause various health problems, like heart disease, kidney disease and stroke.

**~1.66 billion people** live with **Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD)**<sup>3</sup>†. Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease is when fat builds up in your liver. It was once called non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). MASLD may not cause symptoms. Having obesity or Type 2 diabetes increases the risk of developing it. Around 20-30% of those living with MASLD will progress to **Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatohepatitis (MASH)**<sup>4</sup>. MASH is inflammation of your liver caused by excess fat cells (steatotic liver disease). Chronic inflammation causes progressive liver damage. MASH resembles hepatitis caused by alcohol use, but it stems from something else. It's most often associated with overweight, high blood lipids and high blood sugar.

**~523 million people** live with cardiovascular disease (CVD)<sup>5</sup>¶ Cardiovascular disease is a general term for conditions affecting the heart or blood vessels. It is usually associated with a build-up of fatty deposits inside the arteries (atherosclerosis) and an increased risk of blood clots. It can also damage arteries in organs such as the brain, heart, kidneys, and eyes.

**~843 million people** live with **chronic kidney disease (CKD)**<sup>6</sup>|. Chronic kidney disease means your kidneys are damaged and can't filter blood properly. The main risk factors for developing kidney disease are obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

**>2.5 billion people**<sup>\*</sup> live with **hyperlipidaemia**<sup>7</sup>. Hyperlipidaemia (high cholesterol) is an excess of lipids or fats in your blood. This can increase your risk of heart attack and stroke because blood can't flow through your arteries easily.

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<sup>2</sup> GBD 2021 Diabetes Collaborators. Lancet 2023;402:203-234;

<sup>3</sup> Younossi ZN, et al. Hepatology 2023;77:1335-1347;

<sup>4</sup> Fernando DH, et al. Int J Mol Sci 2019;20:5037;

<sup>5</sup> GBD 2019 Diseases and Injuries Collaborators. Lancet 2020;396:1204-1222;

<sup>6</sup> Jager KJ, et al. Kidney Int 2019;96:1048-1050;

<sup>7</sup> Pirillo A, et al, Nat Rev Cardiol 2021; 18:689-700;

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\*Based on the global prevalence (~39%) of raised plasma total cholesterol levels among adults aged  $\geq 25$  years in 2008 (global population was 6.7 billion in 2008)<sup>8</sup>

†Estimated prevalent cases of MASLD in 2019;

‡Number of people aged 30-79 years with hypertension in 2019;

|Number of people with CKD stages 1-5 in 2017;

¶Prevalence data for 2019; CV disease from 11 causes, including ischaemic heart disease, stroke, hypertensive heart disease and disability due to HF;

#Prevalence data for 2021;

\*\*Prevalence data for 2017.

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<sup>8</sup> 2008 World Population Data Sheet. 2008. Available at [https://www.prb.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/2008-WPDS\\_Eng.pdf](https://www.prb.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/2008-WPDS_Eng.pdf). Last accessed October 2024.

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