

Czech Republic

How do we perform with regard to obesity?

The average value for Body Mass Index is at the upper limit of normal.

Obesity, corpulence, extra kilograms – all these are expressions we can read in the media. The individual terms are not only related to the aesthetic inadequacies but also apply in the context of many of the health problems in the population today. As a nation, we have taken some small steps in the last three years with respect to improvements in terms of body weight. At 24.8, the average value for body mass index (BMI) is not far from the upper limit of normal.

More than two fifths of Czech men are overweight

GfK Praha's research shows that almost three fifths of the population in the Czech Republic is within the normal weight range (59%). Just under one third of the population (31%) can already be described as slightly obese, 8 % are obese and life threatening obesity is found in less than one percent of the respondents. However, the number of people who are underweight has reached 2 %.

More than two fifths (44%) of Czech men are overweight (the average BMI for men is 25.4) and 82% of them are happy with their weight. This attitude differs from that found amongst the female population. One third of women are overweight (average women's BMI is 24.2) but less than three quarters of them are happy about it (70%). About the same number of men and women are seriously obese whilst the respondents suffering from being underweight are mainly women.

Barbora Vecerkova, Account Director at GfK Praha, adds: *"If we consider the age of the inhabitants, then the majority of people of normal weight and including those that are underweight, are people aged under 25 years. The excessive weight gain of the inhabitants increases with their age. The number of persons suffering from slight obesity increases after the age of 35 and the highest figure is found in the group of 56 to 65 years of age (48%). The number of people who are obese increases after the age of 55. Almost one in five of elderly persons is obese.*

People with lower educational levels are more often obese (attended high school without passing the final examinations and educational establishment attendees who have not passed the final examination). A focus on regions shows the best weight control is found amongst the inhabitants of North Bohemia and North Moravia and the worst in South Bohemia."



How to do it?

Currently, the majority of the population wants to maintain their present weight (69 %). Just over a quarter (27 %) of the population wants to lose weight and only 4% want to gain some weight.

The most common way people try to lose weight is by limiting their intake of food or frequency of eating (61 %) or by changing their daily menu (57 %). Men, and especially the younger age groups, prefer playing sports regularly whilst women tend to prefer a reducing diet. In contrast, the least popular methods of weight loss are suggestion, hypnosis, magnetic earrings or a belly belt.

Comparison of results with the year 2005

"If we compare this year's results with 2005, we find that the average BMI has decreased slightly and is now at the upper limit of normal (it has fallen from 25.2 in 2005 to 24.8 in 2008)." says Barbora Vecerkova. She continues: "This fact is specifically influenced by the increase in the number of people of normal weight (which has increased by 19 percent) and the decrease of respondents in the slightly obese category, but also by the numbers who are underweight. The improvement has mainly taken place amongst the youngest age groups."

GfK Praha has been monitoring the nation's BMI on a regular basis since 1998. The last assessment took place in July 2008 as part of the multi-topic investigation among the population of the Czech Republic (Omnibus GfK Praha). Data regarding body weight and height together with information as to how happy they are with their weight and what methods of maintaining their weight they prefer were collected from a sample of respondents (a total of 1000 persons over 14 years of age) which was selected using the random multi-level selection process. The BMI, which is one measure of body condition, was then calculated using the acquired data.

BMI formula, used also during the previous investigations:

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{weight in kg}}{(\text{height in m})^2}$$

BMI categories:

BMI value	Classification
Under 18.5	Underweight
18.5 – 24.9	Normal weight
25 – 29.9	Slight obesity
30 – 39.9	Obesity
Above 40	Serious, life threatening obesity



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