

BMI Surveillance

An initiative of the Obesity, Nutrition & Physical Activity Program

What Is BMI Surveillance?

BMI stands for Body Mass Index – an inexpensive and easy method to categorize weight status (e.g., underweight, normal weight, overweight, obese) – which is calculated with height and weight.

Surveillance involves the systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of health data for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs.



Surveillance	vs	Medical Screening
Used to monitor population health		Used to diagnose and treat a patient
Population-based		Patient-based
Anonymous		Tied to a patient's identity
Collected by public health officials or researchers		Collected by clinicians
Randomized sample		Clinician's caseload

Purpose of BMI Surveillance

- Monitor childhood obesity over time
- Identify at-risk populations
- Guide state and local prevention efforts
- Inform appropriate resource allocation



Surveillance Methods

Population

- Kindergarten and third grade students

Sampling Method

- 70 randomly-selected elementary schools across NM
- Interested schools not selected in the sample can still participate. Their data are not included in surveillance analyses and reports.

Timeline

- Annually
- Measurements take place between the beginning of the school year until Thanksgiving

Procedure

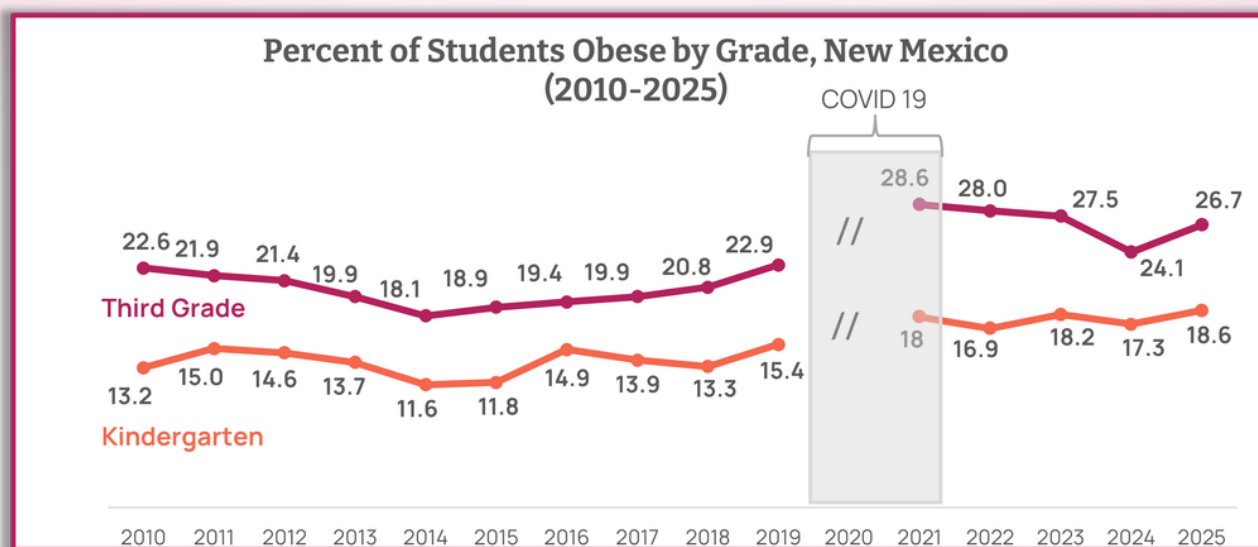
- A standard protocol is used to ensure accuracy and integrity of the data
- Careful placement of measurement stations and the use of privacy screens assure student privacy

Partners

- Schools, nursing programs, and volunteers across the state



NM Childhood Weight Status



*Obesity rates since COVID-19 are only representative of non-metro areas of the state.

What We Do with the Data

After collecting the data from schools, NMDOH:

- Analyzes the data
- Creates a statewide report (**schools are never identified in any public report**)
- Provides a confidential report to each school
- Shares the statewide report with policy makers and state agencies
- Discusses each school's report with school leadership

Weight status data have contributed to shaping healthier school environments.

Based on their reports, schools have made the following changes:

- Established edible gardens and incorporated nutrition education into curricula
- Scheduled recess before lunch, a national best practice
- Planned walking and biking events
- Implemented healthy fundraising
- Awarded grants for playground equipment



For questions about BMI Surveillance, please contact:

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