

With the overall lack of physical activity and poor health habits of many Americans, it's no surprise that our nation is heavier than ever. The latest figures from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, state that 66 percent of American adults age 20 or older, are overweight or obese.

If that fact doesn't convince you to make losing weight a priority for your health, take a look at these statistics reported in several medical journals and by national cancer organizations:

The risk of dying of uterine cancer is 50 percent higher for women who are overweight than for women who are normal weight; and for the most obese women, the risk is roughly six times higher, according to data from the New England Journal of Medicine.

The risk of dying of colorectal cancer is 20 percent higher for men who are overweight than for men who are normal weight; and for the most obese men, the risk is almost double (84 percent higher).

The risk of postmenopausal breast cancer rises by 30 percent in overweight women and 50 percent in obese women, according to the American Journal of Epidemiology.

Older women who are just slightly overweight increase their odds of developing colon cancer by 29 percent compared with their leaner peers.

Being moderately overweight raised the risk by 31 percent and being obese by 49 percent, according to research conducted by the National Cancer Institute.

Cancer of the endometrium (the lining of the uterus) is twice as likely in overweight women and three-and-a-half times more likely in obese women than in normal-weight women, according to a report in Nature Reviews.

The heaviest men in a National Institutes of Health-AARP Diet and Health Study had twice the risk of colon cancer, while the heaviest women had a 50 percent increase in risk. Even for people who are mildly overweight, the risk increases, according to a report in the American Journal of Epidemiology.

Excess weight accounts for more than a third of all cases of gallbladder cancer in the United States, according to the American Cancer Society.

The risk of dying of prostate cancer is 25 percent higher in men who are overweight than in those who are normal weight, and the risk is twice as high in the most obese men, according to research from the National Institutes of Health-AARP Diet and Health Study as reported in the Cancer journal.

Studies estimate that the obese have anywhere from one-and-a-half to four times the risk of liver cancer, reports the New England Journal of Medicine.

Of course, the list of statistics can go on. The fact is: Excess weight can increase your risk of cancer; and the more overweight you are, the higher your risk.