

Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Denmark



© Hansen-Photo.com

This is one of the 53 country profiles covering developments in nutrition, physical activity and obesity in the WHO European Region. The full set of individual profiles and an overview report including methodology and summary can be downloaded from the WHO Regional Office for Europe website: <http://www.euro.who.int/en/nutrition-country-profiles>.

© World Health Organization 2013
All rights reserved.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Total population	5 550 000
Median age (years)	40.6
Life expectancy at birth (years) female male	80.5 76.0
GDP per capita (US\$)	55 830.0
GDP spent on health (%)	11.4

Monitoring and surveillance Overweight and obesity in three age groups

Adults (20 years and over)

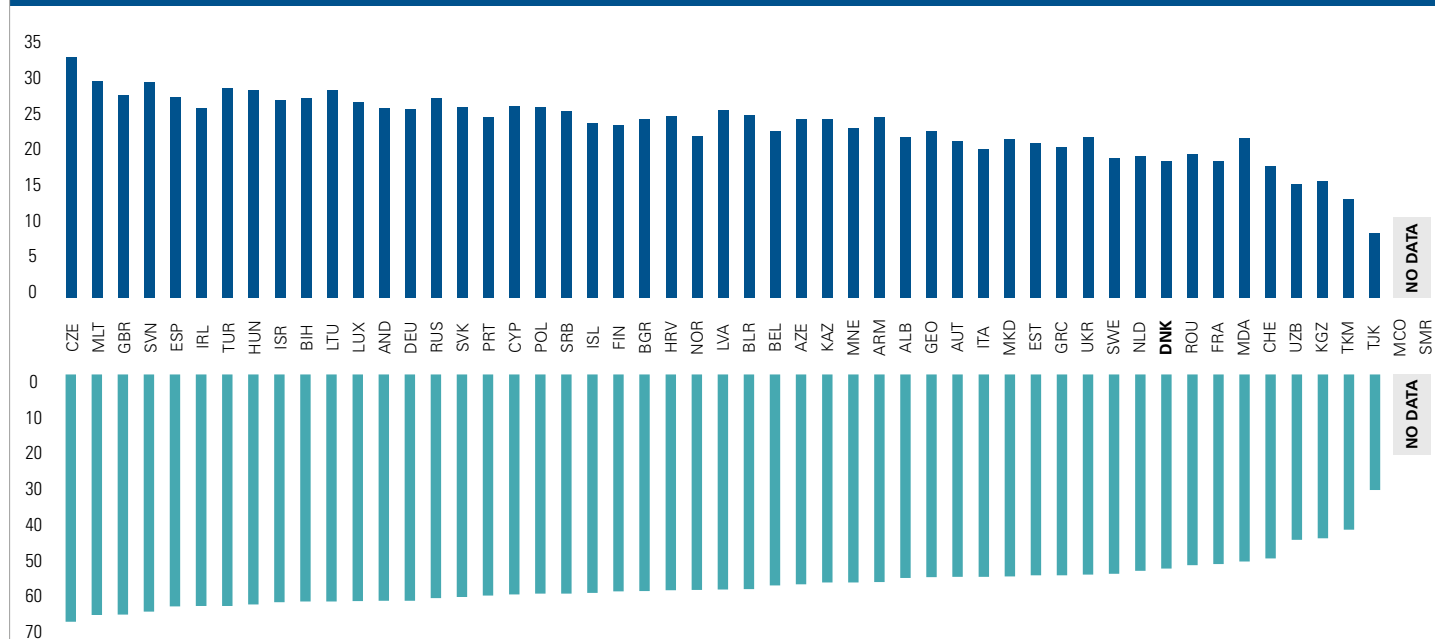
Intercountry comparable overweight and obesity estimates from 2008 (1) show that 51.9% of the adult population (≥ 20 years old) in Denmark were overweight and 18.2% were obese. The prevalence of overweight was higher among men (57.8%) than women (46.2%). The proportion of men and women that were obese was 18.7% and 17.6%, respectively. Adulthood obesity prevalence forecasts (2010–2030) predict that in 2020, 20% of men and 19% of women will be obese. By 2030, the model predicts that 27% of men and 26% of women will be obese.¹

PREVALENCE OF OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY (%) AMONG DANISH ADULTS BASED ON WHO 2008 ESTIMATES



Source: WHO Global Health Observatory Data Repository (1).

PREVALENCE OF OBESITY (%) (BMI ≥ 30.0 KG/M²) AMONG ADULTS IN THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION BASED ON WHO 2008 ESTIMATES



PREVALENCE OF OVERWEIGHT (%) (BMI ≥ 25.0 KG/M²) AMONG ADULTS IN THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION BASED ON WHO 2008 ESTIMATES

Notes. The country codes refer to the ISO 3166-1 Alpha-3 country codes. Data ranking for obesity is intentionally the same as for the overweight data. BMI: body mass index.
Source: WHO Global Health Observatory Data Repository (1).

¹ Report on modelling adulthood obesity across the WHO European Region, prepared by consultants (led by T. Marsh and colleagues) for the WHO Regional Office for Europe in 2013.

The Regional Office is grateful to the European Commission (EC) for its financial support for the preparation of this country profile and the development of the nutrition, obesity and physical activity database that provided data for it.

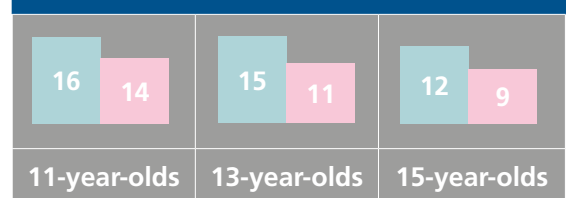
Adolescents (10–19 years)

In terms of prevalence of overweight and obesity in adolescents, up to 16% of boys and 14% of girls among 11-year-olds were overweight, according to data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey (2009/2010).² Among 13-year-olds, the corresponding figures were 15% for boys and 11% for girls, and among 15-year-olds, 12% and 9%, respectively (2).

Children (0–9 years)

No prevalence figures are available for overweight and obesity in schoolchildren based on measured intercountry comparable data. Denmark is not yet participating in the WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI).

PREVALENCE OF OVERWEIGHT (%) IN DANISH ADOLESCENTS (BASED ON SELF-REPORTED DATA ON HEIGHT AND WEIGHT)

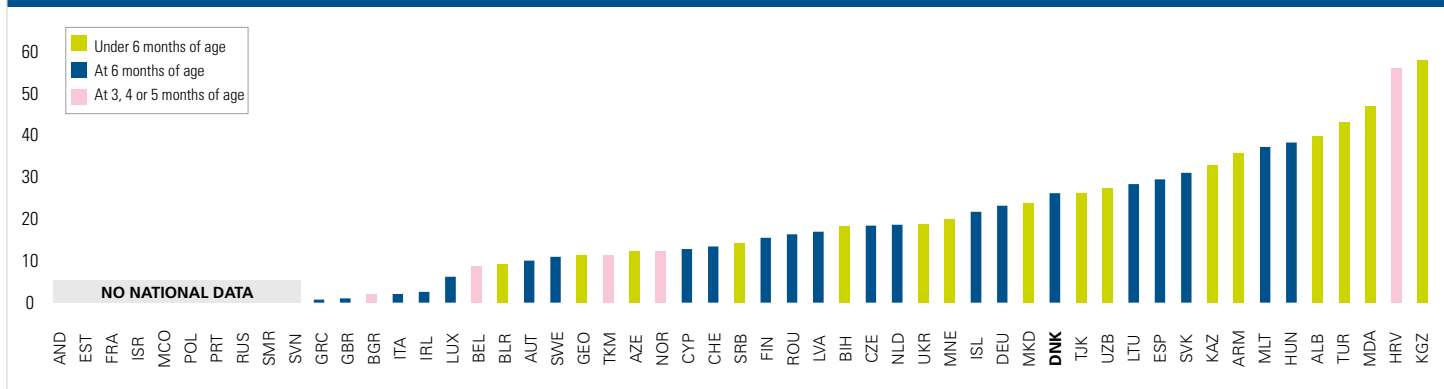


Source: Currie et al. (2).

Exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months of age

Nationally representative data from 2005 show that the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding at 6 months of age was 25.3% in Denmark.³

PREVALENCE OF EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING (%) UNDER OR AT 6 MONTHS OF AGE FROM INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY-BASED SURVEYS, VARIOUS YEARS



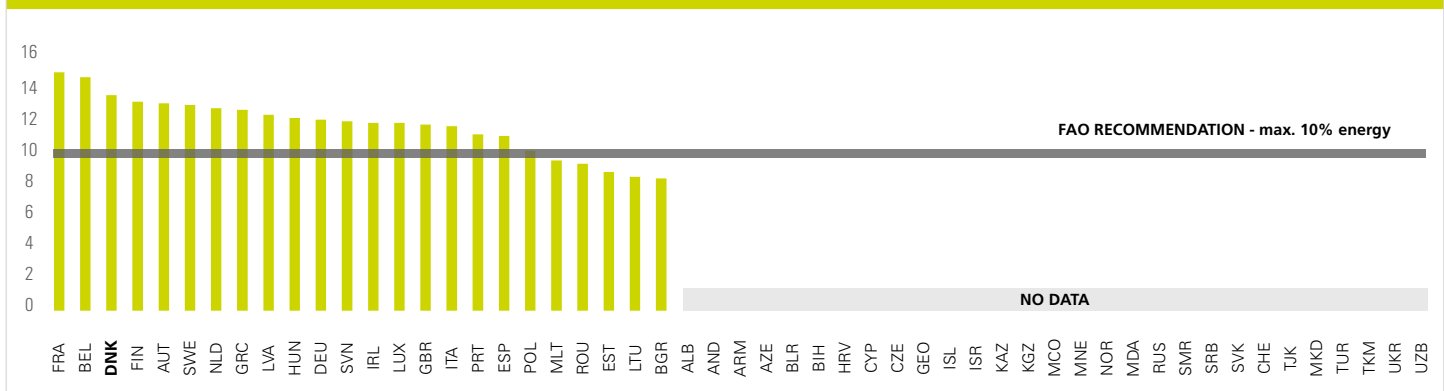
Notes. The country codes refer to the ISO 3166-1 Alpha-3 country codes. Data were derived from country-specific publications on surveys carried out in this field, not as part of a European-wide survey. Due to different data collection methods of the country-specific surveys, any comparisons between countries must be made with caution.

Source: WHO Regional Office for Europe grey literature from 2012 on breastfeeding.

Saturated fat intake

According to 2007 estimates, the adult population in Denmark consumed 13.2% of their total calorie intake from saturated fatty acids (3).

PROPORTION OF ENERGY FROM SATURATED FATTY ACIDS (%) AMONG ADULTS IN THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION, 2007



Notes. The country codes refer to the ISO 3166-1 Alpha-3 country codes. Ranking of data was carried out so that country data at the right-hand side of the graph – with values below the FAO recommendation – fall within the positive frame of the indicator. FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

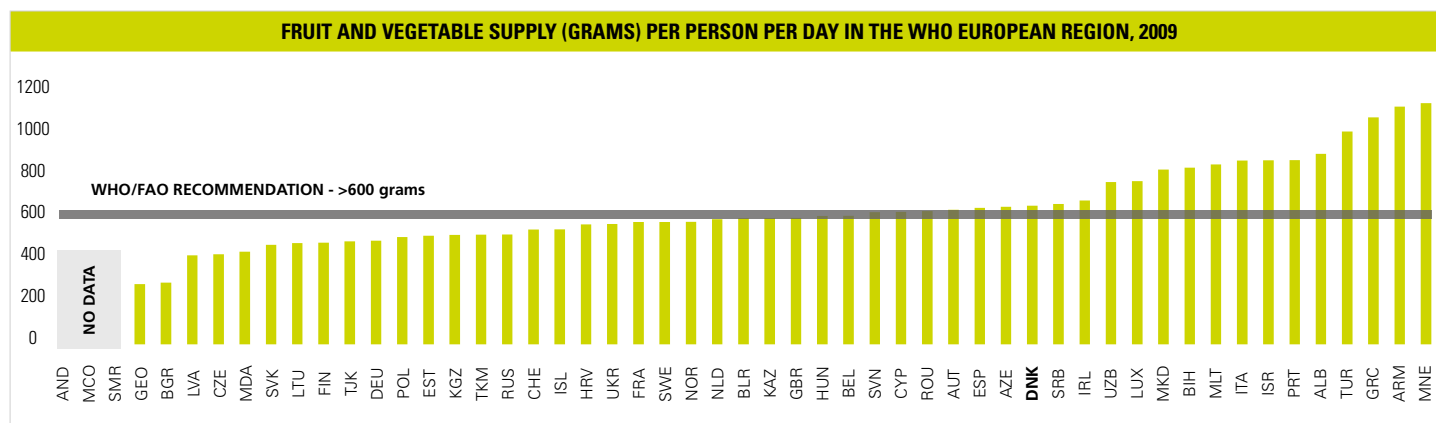
Source: FAOSTAT (3).

² Based on 2007 WHO growth reference.

³ WHO Regional Office for Europe grey literature from 2012 on breastfeeding.

Fruit and vegetable supply

Denmark had a fruit and vegetable supply of 645 grams per capita per day, according to 2009 estimates (3).

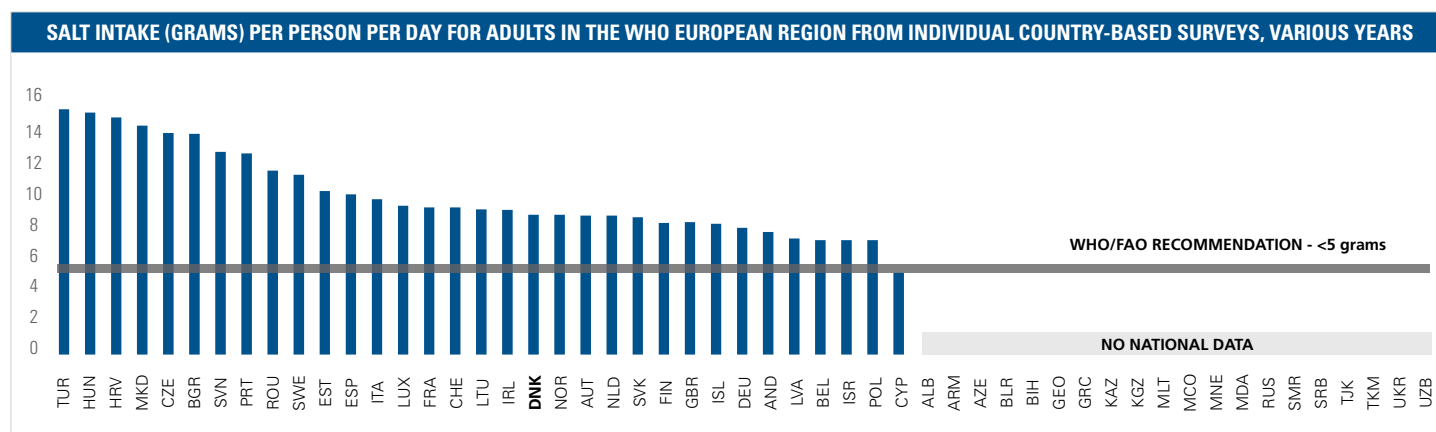


Notes. The country codes refer to the ISO 3166-1 Alpha-3 country codes. Ranking of data was carried out so that country data at the right-hand side of the graph – with values above the WHO/FAO recommendation – fall within the positive frame of the indicator.

Source: FAOSTAT (3).

Salt intake

Data from 2008 show that salt intake in Denmark was 9.8 grams per day for men and 7.3 grams per day for women (4).



Notes. The country codes refer to the ISO 3166-1 Alpha-3 country codes. Data were derived from country-specific publications on surveys carried out in this field, not as part of a European-wide survey. Due to different data collection methods of the country-specific surveys, any comparisons between countries must be made with caution. Ranking of data was carried out so that country data at the right-hand side of the graph – with values below the WHO/FAO recommendation – fall within the positive frame of the indicator.

Source: WHO Regional Office for Europe (4).

Iodine status

According to the most recent estimates on iodine status, published in 2012, the proportion of the population with an iodine level lower than 100 µg/L was 48.1% (5, 6).

Physical inactivity

In Denmark, 36.6% of the population aged 15 years and over were insufficiently active (men 35.8% and women 37.3%) according to estimates generated for 2008 by WHO (1).

Policies and actions

The table below displays (a) monitoring and evaluation methods of salt intake in Denmark; (b) the stakeholder approach toward salt reduction; and (c) the population approach in terms of labelling and consumer awareness initiatives (4).

Salt reduction initiatives

Monitoring & evaluation		Stakeholder approach			Population approach						
					Labelling	Consumer awareness initiatives					
						Brochure Print	TV Radio	Website Software	Education Schools	Conference	Reporting
Industry self-reporting		Industry involvement	Food reformulation	Specific food category					Health care facilities		
Salt content in food	XXX										
Salt intake	XXX										
Consumer awareness		XX		16% salt reduction by 2012							
Behavioural change											
Urinary salt excretion (24 hrs)	XX (spot urine)				XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX		

Notes. XX partially implemented; XXX fully implemented.

Source: WHO Regional Office for Europe (4).

Trans fatty acids (TFA) policies

Legislation	Type of legislation	Measure
2003	Mandatory restriction	No mandatory declaration of TFA in food levels but mandatory compositional restrictions of TFA in fats and oils to <2% of the total fatty acids

Source: WHO Regional Office for Europe grey literature from 2012 on TFA and health, TFA policy and food industry approaches.

Price policies (food taxation and subsidies)

Taxes	School fruit schemes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tax on sugar content ✓ Tax on fat content ✓ Tax on sugar-sweetened beverages by volume 	✓

Sources: WHO Regional Office for Europe grey literature from 2012 on diet and the use of fiscal policy in the control and prevention of noncommunicable diseases; EC School Fruit Scheme website (7).

Marketing of food and non-alcoholic beverages to children (8)

The Danish Government considers that unhealthy food advertising to children should be eliminated through self-regulation, with possible further action if this does not work, in which case it would be in favour of the European Union (EU) (9). The private self-regulating Forum of Responsible Food Marketing Communication (10) – launched in December 2007 – has developed a “Code of responsible food marketing communication to children” addressing food advertising targeted at children (11). The partners in this initiative are the Danish Food and Drink Federation within the Confederation of Danish Industries, the Danish Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Retail Grocers in Denmark, TV2 | DANMARK, the Danish Brewers’ Association, the Danish Newspaper Publishers’ Association, the Danish Association of Advertising Agencies, the Danish Association of Internet Media, the Danish Association of Advertising and Relationship Agencies, and the Danish Magazine Publishers’ Association.

Physical activity (PA), national policy documents and action plans

Sport	Target groups	Health	Education		Transportation	
Existence of national “sport for all” policy and/or national “sport for all” implementation programme	Existence of specific scheme or programme for community interventions to promote PA in the elderly	Counselling on PA as part of primary health care activities	Mandatory physical education in primary and secondary schools	Inclusion of PA in general teaching training	National or subnational schemes promoting active travel to school	Existence of an incentive scheme for companies or employees to promote active travel to work
✓			✓ ^b		✓ ^a	✓ ^a

^a Clearly stated in a policy document, partially implemented or enforced. ^b Clearly stated in a policy document, entirely implemented and enforced.

Source: country reporting template on Denmark from 2009 developed in the context of a WHO/EC project on monitoring progress on improving nutrition and PA and preventing obesity in the EU.

Leadership, partnerships and professional networks on health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA)

Existence of national coordination mechanism on HEPA promotion	Leading institution	Participating bodies

Source: country reporting template on Denmark from 2009 developed in the context of a WHO/EC project on monitoring progress on improving nutrition and PA and preventing obesity in the EU.

PA recommendations, goals and surveillance

Existence of national recommendation on HEPA	Target groups addressed by national HEPA policy	PA included in the national health monitoring system
2006 Nordic Plan of Action on better health and quality of life through diet and physical activity	General population	✓

Source: country reporting template on Denmark from 2009 developed in the context of a WHO/EC project on monitoring progress on improving nutrition and PA and preventing obesity in the EU.

References

- WHO Global Health Observatory Data Repository [online database]. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2013 (<http://apps.who.int/gho/data/view.main>, accessed 21 May 2013).
- Currie C et al., eds. *Social determinants of health and well-being among young people: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study: international report from the 2009/2010 survey*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2012 (Health Policy for Children and Adolescents, No. 6) (http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/163857/Social-determinants-of-health-and-well-being-among-young-people.pdf, accessed 21 May 2013).
- FAOSTAT [online database]. Rome, Statistics Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2013 (<http://faostat.fao.org/>, accessed 21 May 2013).
- Mapping salt reduction initiatives in the WHO European Region*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2013 (http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/186462/Mapping-salt-reduction-initiatives-in-the-WHO-European-Region-final.pdf, accessed 29 May 2013).
- Andersson M, Karumbunathan V, Zimmermann MB. Global iodine status in 2011 and trends over the past decade. *Journal of Nutrition*, 2012, 142(4):744–750.
- Zimmerman MB, Andersson M. Update on iodine status worldwide. *Current Opinion in Endocrinology, Diabetes and Obesity*, 2012, 19(5):382–387.
- School Fruit Scheme [website]. Brussels, European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, 2012 (http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sfs/eu-countries/index_en.htm, accessed 21 May 2013).
- Marketing of foods high in fat, salt and sugar to children: update 2012–2013*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2013 (http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/191125/e96859.pdf, accessed 10 October 2013).
- Directive 2007/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2007 amending Council Directive 89/552/EEC on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities. *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2007, L 332:27–45 (<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:332:0027:0045:EN:PDF>, accessed 3 June 2013).

10. Forum for Fødevarereklamer [Forum of responsible food marketing communication] [website]. Copenhagen, Forum of Responsible Food Marketing Communication, 2013 (<http://kodeksforfoedevarereklamer.di.dk/Om%20Kodeks/Forum/Pages/Forum.aspx>, accessed 25 July 2013).
11. *Code of responsible food marketing communication to children*. Copenhagen, Forum of Responsible Food Marketing Communication, 2010 (<http://kodeksforfoedevarereklamer.di.dk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Foreningssites/kodeksforfoedevarereklamer.di.dk/Downloadboks/Kodeks%20eng%20sep%202008%20samlet.pdf>, accessed 25 July 2013).