

# Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity

## Sweden



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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>.

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DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	
Total population	9 482 855
Median age (years)	40.7
Life expectancy at birth (years) female   male	84.0   80.0
GDP per capita (US\$)	48 906.0
GDP spent on health (%)	9.6

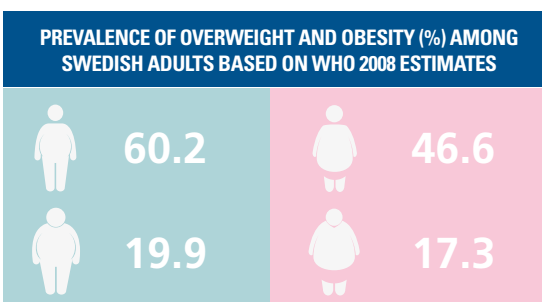
### Monitoring and surveillance

#### Overweight and obesity in three age groups

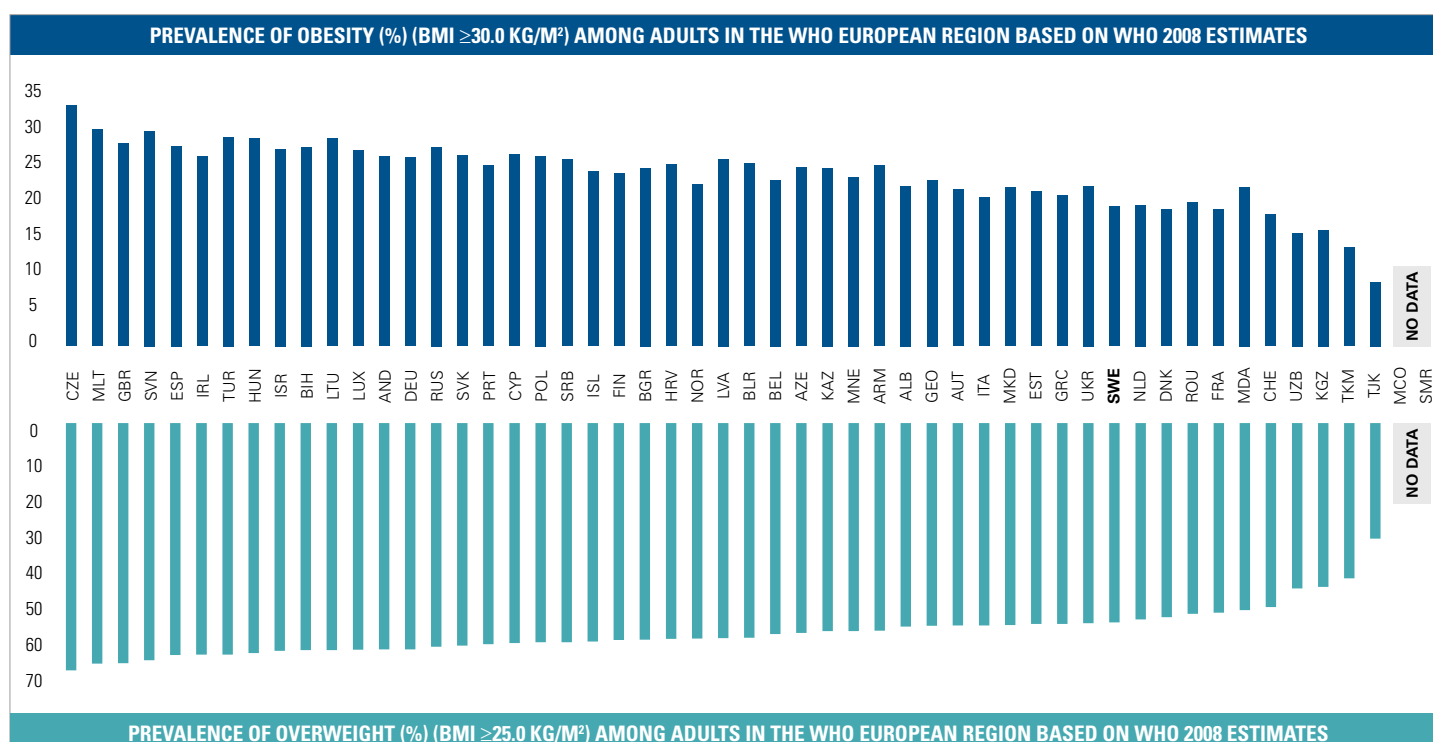
##### Adults (16/20 years and over)

Intercountry comparable overweight and obesity estimates from 2008 (1) show that 53.3% of the adult population ( $\geq 20$  years old) in Sweden were overweight and 18.6% were obese. The prevalence of overweight was higher among men (60.2%) than women (46.6%). The proportion of men and women that were obese was 19.9% and 17.3%, respectively.

According to a nationally representative survey carried out in 2011 among individuals aged 16–84 years, 49% were overweight and 13% were obese (based on self-reported weight and height). Overweight prevalence estimates for men and women were 57% and 41%, respectively. The prevalence of obesity for men and women was 14% and 13%, respectively (2). It should be taken into



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



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).

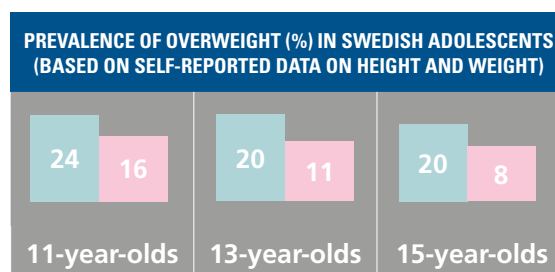
The Regional Office is grateful to the European Commission (EC) for its financial support for the preparation of this country profile and the development of the nutrition, obesity and physical activity database that provided data for it.

account that these data do not allow for comparability across countries due to sampling and methodological differences.

Adulthood obesity prevalence forecasts (2010–2030) predict that in 2020, 19% of men and 17% of women will be obese. By 2030, the model predicts that 26% of men and 22% of women will be obese.<sup>1</sup>

### Adolescents (10–19 years)

In terms of prevalence of overweight and obesity in adolescents, up to 24% of boys and 16% of girls among 11-year-olds were overweight, according to data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey (2009/2010).<sup>2</sup> Among 13-year-olds, the corresponding figures were 20% for boys and 11% for girls, and among 15-year-olds, 20% and 8%, respectively (3).



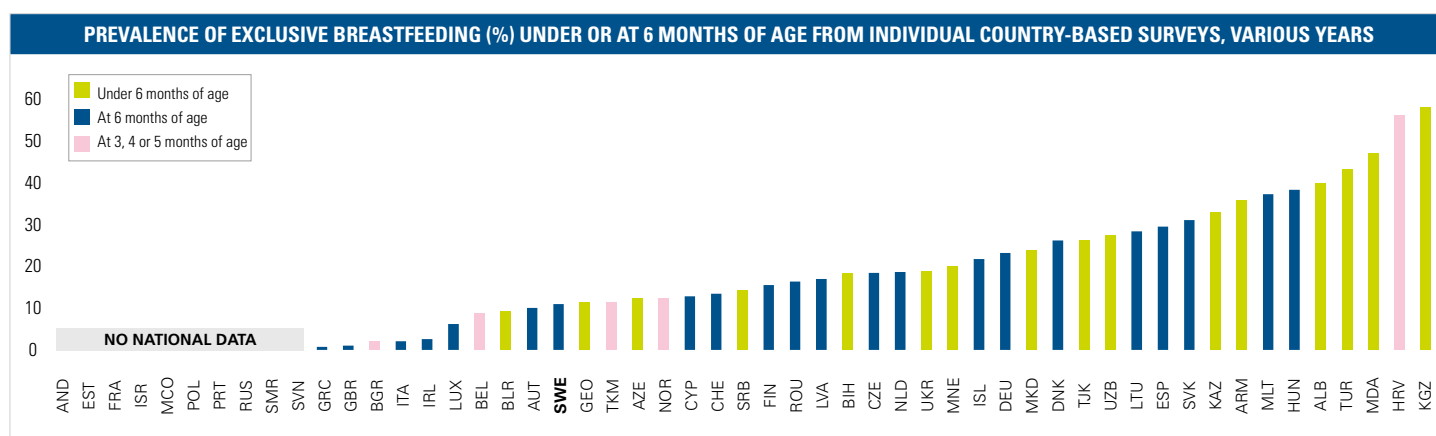
Source: Currie et al. (3).

### Children (0–9 years)

Estimates from the first round (2007/2008) of the WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI) in Sweden showed that among 7-year-olds, 23.5% of boys and 22.0% of girls were overweight and 6.8% and 5.1%, respectively, were obese.<sup>2</sup> The corresponding overweight figures for 8-year-olds were 26.3% for boys and 23.5% for girls, and for obesity, 9.7% and 6.8%, respectively (4).

### Exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months of age

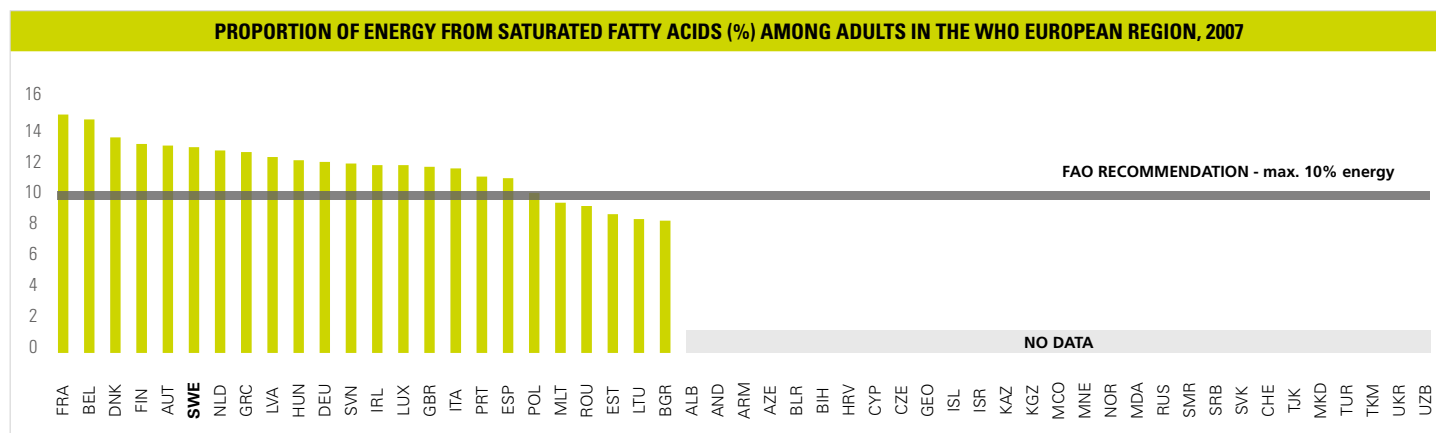
Nationally representative data from 2010 show that the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding at 6 months of age was 10.6% in Sweden.<sup>3</sup> Of the children born in 2010, almost 63% were breastfed to some degree at 6 months of age.



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 the 2007 estimates of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the adult population in Sweden consumed 12.6% of their total calorie intake from saturated fatty acids (5). According to national data from 2010–2011, the adult population aged 18–80 years in Sweden consumed 13.1% of their total calorie intake from saturated fatty acids (6). It should be taken into account that these latter, national data do not allow for comparability across countries due to sampling and other methodological differences.



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. Source: FAOSTAT (5).

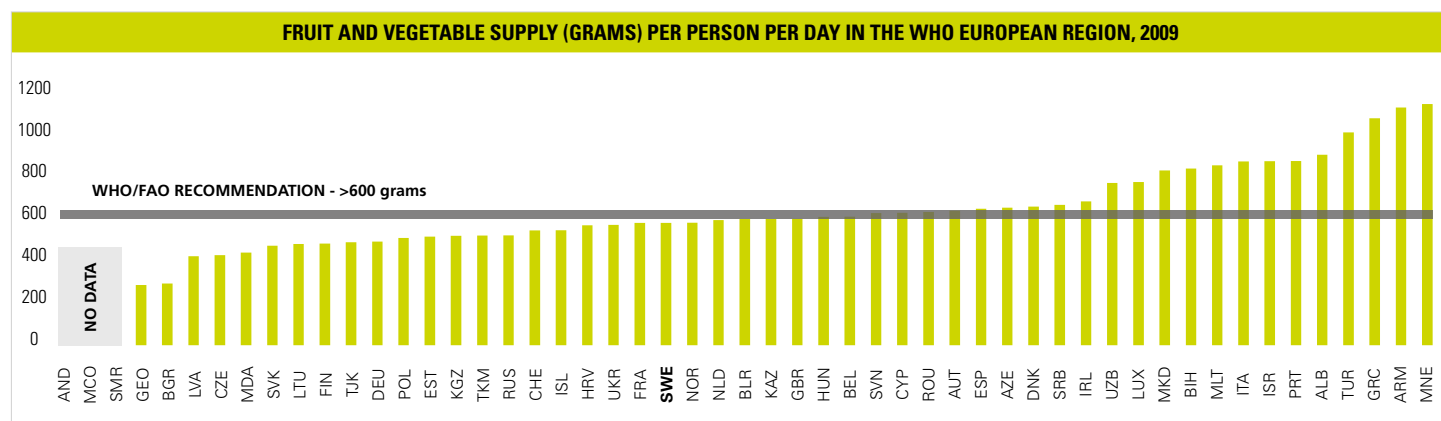
<sup>1</sup> Report on modelling adulthood obesity across the WHO European Region, prepared by consultants (led by T. Marsh and colleagues) for the WHO Regional Office for Europe in 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Based on 2007 WHO growth reference.

<sup>3</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe grey literature from 2012 on breastfeeding.

## Fruit and vegetable supply

Sweden had a fruit and vegetable supply of 569 grams per capita per day, according to 2009 FAO estimates (5). According to national data from 2010–2011, the mean consumption of fruit, vegetables and berries was 360 grams per day for adult men and 310 grams per day for adult women (18–80 years). 21% of the survey participants consumed more than 500 grams of fruit, berries and vegetables (including a maximum of 100 grams of juice) per day (6). It should be taken into account that the latter consumption data do not allow for comparability across countries due to sampling and other methodological differences.

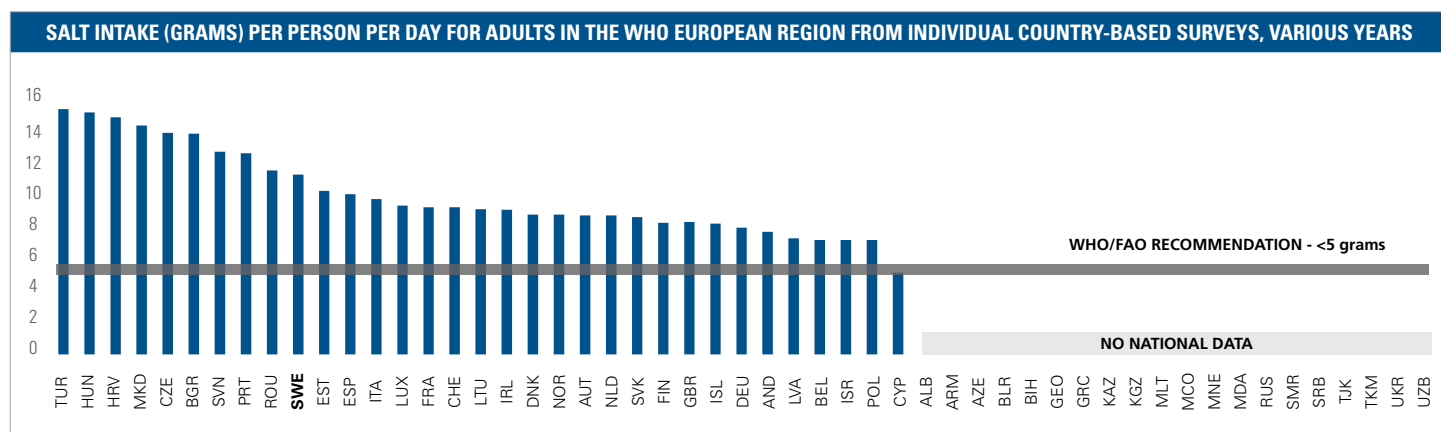


*Notes:* The country codes refer to the ISO 3166-1 Alpha-3 country codes. Ranking of data was carried out so that country data at the right side of the graph – with values above the WHO/FAO recommendation – fall within the positive frame of the indicator.

*Source:* FAOSTAT (5).

## Salt intake

Data from 2007 show that salt intake in Sweden was between 10.0 grams and 12.0 grams per day for both men and women (7).



*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 (7).

## 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 30.0% (8, 9).

## Physical inactivity

In Sweden, 47.1% of the population aged 15 years and over were insufficiently active (men 46.0% and women 48.1%), according to estimates generated for 2008 by WHO (1). National data from 2011 show that 13% of adults aged 16–84 years were insufficiently active during their leisure time (2). It should be taken into account that these national data do not allow for comparability across countries due to sampling and methodological differences.

## Policies and actions

The table below displays (a) monitoring and evaluation methods of salt intake in Sweden; (b) the stakeholder approach toward salt reduction; and (c) the population approach in terms of labelling and consumer awareness initiatives (7).

## Salt reduction initiatives

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

Note: **xxx** fully implemented.

Source: WHO Regional Office for Europe (7).

## Trans fatty acids (TFA) policies

Legislation	Type of legislation	Measure
In progress		Developing legislation to prohibit TFA

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

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 (10).

## Marketing of food and non-alcoholic beverages to children (11)

The Marketing Act (12) includes a ban on any advertising targeting children under the age of 12 years on national radio and TV before and during children's programmes (13). People associated with children's radio or TV programmes are not allowed to take part in advertising targeting children under the age of 12 years. According to European legislation (14), the ban only covers broadcasts originating in Sweden.

The majority of such advertisements originate from two Swedish-language channels based in the United Kingdom. These channels have recently voluntarily stopped advertising food to children and – as a result of the United Kingdom's new broadcasting code (15) that includes restrictions on the marketing of foods high in fat, sugar or salt to children – Sweden will probably now have relatively little marketing of food to children on TV.

## 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
✓	✓	✓ <sup>a</sup>	✓ <sup>b</sup>			

<sup>a</sup> Clearly stated in a policy document, partially implemented or enforced. <sup>b</sup> Clearly stated in a policy document, entirely implemented and enforced.

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

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

Existence of national coordination mechanism on HEPA promotion	Leading institution	Participating bodies
✓ 2001	Swedish National Institute of Public Health and Swedish National Centre for Child Health Promotion	Government departments on health and sport; nongovernmental organizations; communities; private sector

Source: country reporting template on Sweden 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
	General population	

Source: country reporting template on Sweden 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.

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