

[IMAGE]

Health Care Costs Rise With Obesity

By Editorial Staff

Nearly \$5,000 per year for a woman and more than \$2,500 if you're a man; that's approximately what it costs the health care system - you, your employer, your health care insurer, etc. - every year if you're obese, according to a recent report issued by the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, Department of Health Policy.

The report, "A Heavy Burden: The Individual Costs of Being Overweight and Obese in the United States," estimated the average per-person cost of being overweight and obese, considering such factors as lost wages, gasoline costs (presumably to visit health care providers more frequently than healthy-weight people), direct medical costs, short-term disability, pension insurance, absenteeism and productivity losses. Even costs attributable to lower wages (employers facing higher costs due to obese employees might have to reduce company-wide wages to control costs) were factored into the equation.

All told, the annual cost of being overweight in America was \$524 for an overweight woman and \$432 for an overweight man. As mentioned, the costs of obesity were substantially higher: \$4,879 per year for an obese woman and \$2,646 for an obese man. Shocking numbers to consider at any time, but particularly during this economic downturn when individuals, businesses and the government are keenly focused on ways to contain ballooning costs.

healthcare cost - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark The primary added costs of obesity, as you might imagine, are direct medical costs, which leads to a vicious cycle: Higher costs = higher insurance premiums = less people who can afford insurance = more unhealthy people. Another major reason we should all eat healthy, exercise and maintain a healthy weight.

Page printed from:

http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=1373&no_paginate=true&no_b=true