

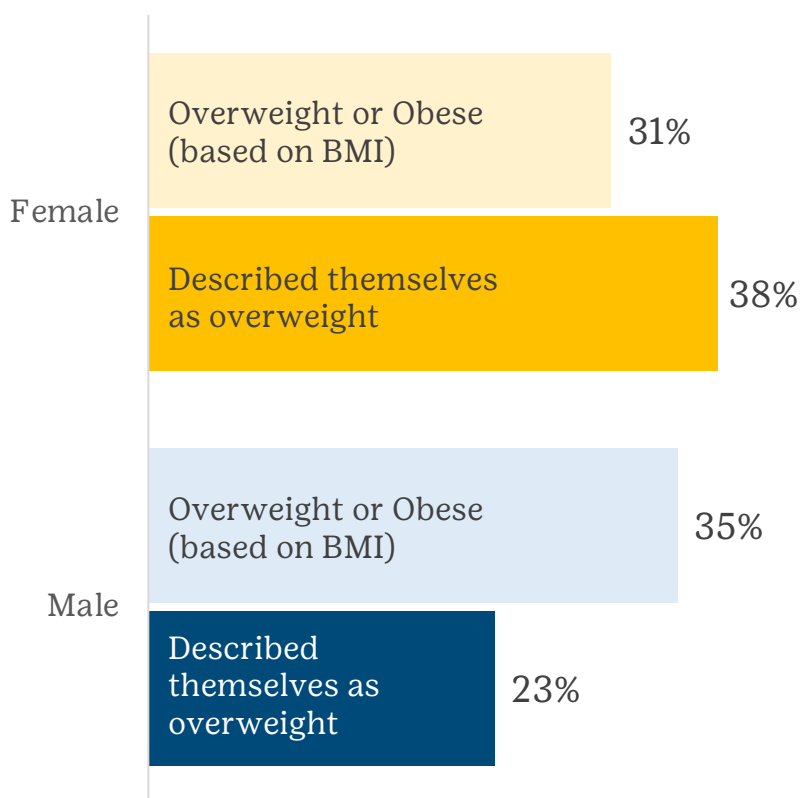


Body Image & Eating Disorders

Commissioned by the Girl Scout Councils Serving Alabama

Twice as many girls are restricting food to lose weight compared to boys. Yet, more boys are actually overweight.

Perceived vs Actual Weight
among Alabama High School Youth



Girls are more likely than boys to have a distorted view of their own body. As expected, this distortion also leads to more girls having a diagnosed eating disorder. In a survey of high school youth in Alabama, 38% of girls described themselves as overweight; yet, only 31% were medically classified as being overweight or obese based on BMI. More boys were actually overweight (35%) compared to girls, but only 23% described themselves as overweight.

- On average, eating disorders begin at the age of 14. Since eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of all mental illness, the higher prevalence among girls is of significant concern.
- Studies show distorted body image impacts self-esteem, social functioning, and academic performance.

Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, CDC, 2021, Alabama.

Healthy Living *and* Healthy Attitudes

Adults must strike a delicate balance of encouraging girls to lead a healthy lifestyle while also ensuring a positive self-image. Two important aspects of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience are a road map for achieving this balance: our program allows girls to fall in love with aspects of healthy living while adults offer encouragement through the ups and downs of their adolescence.

15%
of girls restrict
food to control
their weight
according to
Alabama
parents.