

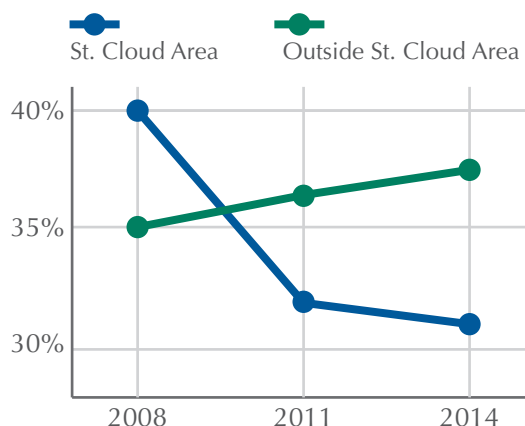
Greater St. Cloud's Overweight and Obesity Rates Drop By 28 Percent Over Six Years Among Pre-Teens

The rate of 12-year-old boys in the St. Cloud Area who are overweight or obese declined by 28% between 2008 and 2014.

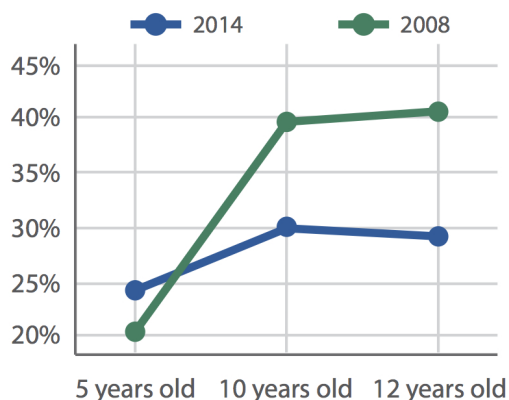
The downward trend runs counter to other Central Minnesota communities served by CentraCare, where overweight and obesity rates increased from 34% in 2008 to 38% in 2014.

Health leaders credit the drop in rates of children with unhealthy weights to BLEND – Better Living: Exercise and Nutrition Daily. The community initiative encourages physical activity and healthy eating as part of children's daily lives.

12 Year Old Boys Overweight or Obese



St. Cloud Area Boys Are Maintaining Healthy Weights As Teen Years Approach



While the proportion of 12-year-old boys has dropped significantly ($p=0.034$) over the six year period, the rate of boys entering school overweight or obese remains largely unchanged. Instead, more St. Cloud area boys are maintaining healthy weights throughout elementary school.

By comparison, in 2008 the rate of boys overweight or obese nearly doubled between ages 5 and 12.

BLEND has focused most of its partnerships, policy changes, programs and interventions in and around elementary and middle schools in the St. Cloud area. The work aims to reduce childhood obesity rates by making healthy eating and active living part of children's daily lives.

The data analyzed reflects body mass index (BMI) recorded by CentraCare Health clinicians from Jan. 1, 2008 to Sept. 30, 2014. Findings are significant ($p = 0.034$), and have been verified by statisticians from St. Cloud State University. All methods have been reviewed and approved by the CentraCare Health Institutional Review Board (IRB). Overweight and obesity rates among 10 year old girls also declined during the same period, but the declines did not hold in the pre-teen years.