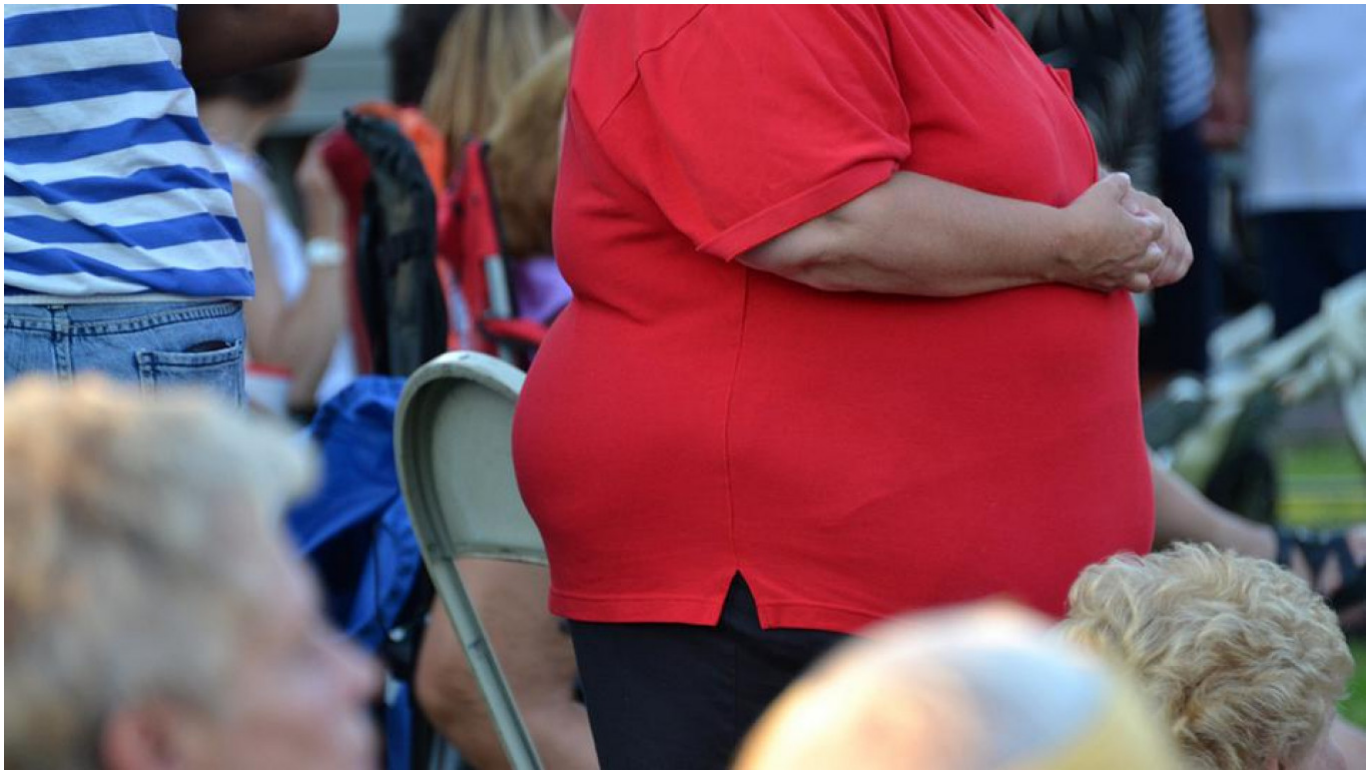
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia's Obesity Rate Up Almost 50% in 5 Years, Health Ministry Says

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The number of Russians diagnosed as obese has increased by almost 50% in five years.

Rising obesity in Russia mirrors a global trend. A 25-year study published last year in The New England Journal of Medicine found that obesity rates had doubled in 70 countries and increased continuously in most others.

"In five years (2011-2016) the [obesity] indicator has grown by 45.5 percent," the state-run TASS news agency reported Friday, quoting the Health Ministry press office.

While 856.5 out of 100,000 people were considered obese in 2011, that figure stood at 1,245.6 per 100,000 five years later, according to the report.

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More than 60 percent of Russia's population is overweight, 20 percent of whom are obese, according to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates.

For adults, the WHO defines overweight as a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 25, and obesity as a BMI greater than or equal to 30.

The Russian Health Ministry has developed a strategy to improve the overall health of the population. This includes measures to combat excessive alcohol consumption and smoking, motivate citizens to exercise, and encourage healthy eating.

The $56-million 2017 government strategy aims to increase the share of Russians "committed to a healthy lifestyle" to 60 percent by 2025.

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