

► Apple says it sold 260,000 new iPhones in 10 days; activation problems prompt apology, 1B.

## Sports: Vick arraignment today

NFL star, three others to appear in federal court in Richmond, Va., on dogfighting charges, 1C.

## Life: Shark Week looks unstoppable

Discovery Channel on Sunday kicks off 20th year of shark-themed programming, TV, 1, 3-4, 10D.  
► FDA panels to weigh risks of diabetes drug, 8D.

By John O. Buckley

## Earnings reports give stocks a lift

Index	Close	Change
Dow Jones industrial average	13,785.07	▲ 68.12
Nasdaq composite	2648.17	▲ 8.31
Treasury note, 10-year yield	4.90%	▼ 0.05
USA TODAY Internet 50	156.28	▼ 0.95

Sources: USA TODAY research, MarketWatch.com

## USA TODAY Snapshots®

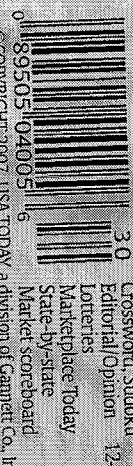
### Academic portrait

Percentage of U.S. college presidents who are...



Source: American Council on Education

By David Stuckey and Nancy E. Mullins, USA TODAY



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# Obesity can run in social circles

## Study: Peers affect ideas on fat and thin

By Nanci Hellmich  
USA TODAY

Obesity is contagious. One person's obesity can significantly increase the chance that his or her friends, siblings and spouse also will become heavy, according to the first study done on how weight gain spreads through social networks. And if a person slims down, the people around him or her also may lose weight.

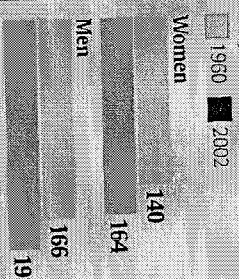
"Both obesity and thinness are socially contagious," says study co-author James Fowler, an associate professor of political science at the University of California-San Diego.

At the heart of the matter is the sharing of acceptable norms for eating and exercise habits, says internist Nicholas Christakis, also a study author and a professor of medical sociology at Harvard Medical School. If someone you care about gains weight, your notion of an acceptable body size may change. You may decide it's OK to go up a couple of sizes, he says.

About a third of Americans are obese, about 30 or more pounds over a healthy weight, which increases their risk of heart disease, diabetes and other problems. In the study, which was funded by the National Institute on Aging, researchers examined social ties among 12,067 people in the Framingham (Mass.) Heart Study, a

## Heavier Americans

The average weight of women and men ages 20-74 has jumped over the past four decades (in pounds).



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

By Robert W. Ahrns, USA TODAY

## The ties that bind

► Leading friends through thick and thin, 8D

multigeneration collection of data covering 32 years.

Findings are reported in today's *New England Journal of Medicine*.

► When people become obese, the risk of their closest friends becoming obese over the next two to four years increases by 1.71%, the study says. The risk for their casual friends increases by 57%, their siblings' risk by 40%, their spouse's, 37%.

► The reverse also is true. When one person sheds pounds, it has a ripple effect and increases the chances by similar percentages that their friends, siblings and spouse will trim down, Fowler says.

► A man's weight has more

effect on the weight of his male buddies and brothers than on his sisters or female friends. And a woman's weight has more effect on her girlfriends and sisters than her brothers or guy friends.

"Men look to men. Women look to women," Fowler says. This may explain why friends appear to have more effect on weight than spouses do, he says.

If one person gains, it can affect social ties with three degrees of separation, so a friend of a friend of a friend also is affected, he says. "One person's weight influences dozens of other people they are connected with both directly and indirectly. It can impact people who are connected through a mutual friend or family member."

Surprisingly, researchers found that the obesity risk is not affected by geographic distance. "If you have a close friend or a sibling who lives a mile or a thousand miles away, that person's weight gain can have the same affect on your weight," Christakis says.

John Foreyt, an obesity researcher at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, suggests: "If you are trying to lose or control your weight, pick your friends carefully. You may not want to be around people who are gaining weight or who are too heavy."

The study may have implications for treatments. "If we can get even a small number of obese people to lose weight, it might have a ripple effect, and we could contribute to reversing the obesity epidemic," Fowler says.

commendations so the government is sure that troops "will get the best possible care and treatment that this government can offer."

The commission's report was the latest in a long series of studies that have recommended many of the same changes without much success. The panel notes 45 other government reports dating back to 1956 that highlighted flaws in the health care system.

Shalala said these proposals are different because they reflect "fundamental change" that takes patient into account. "We said, 'Let's make the system support them, and simplify it for them.'"

Former senator Bob Dole, a wounded World War veteran, co-chaired the panel with Shalala.

The Senate bill, approved by unanimous consent echoes those recommendations and also includes more money for research and treatment of brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"Today, as the president considers the results of study, he commissioned nearly five months ago to examine the extent of problems, we are acting to them," said Sen. Party Murray, D-Wash.

Bush has indicated he will sign the bill if it's passed by the House. White House spokeswoman Emily Laiter said.

Bush created the Commission on Care for America's Wounded Warriors in March.

Returning Wounded Warriors' recommendations: ► Assign a "recovery coordinator" to every seriously injured servicemember to ensure adequate care and "that no one gets lost in the system."

► Aggressively prevent and treat PTSD and brain injuries. The Department of Veterans Affairs has treated more than 52,000 returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans for PTSD, the report said.

## Unions fight to keep their grip

► Anti-union laws spread, and even Michigan may not be immune, 1B

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