

Gain a spouse and you'll likely gain some pounds, too, in first 5 years of marriage

Newly hitched couples add more weight than singles

By Nanci Hellmich
USA TODAY

NEW ORLEANS — Young adults might want to change their wedding vows to say they are taking each other "for better or girth."

Many married and single people in their late teens and early 20s gain a significant amount of weight — an average of 15 to 30 pounds — over five years. But newly married men and women in that age group gain 6 to 9 pounds more than their peers who are single and dating.

These are among the findings of a study released Monday at the annual meeting of the Obesity Society, a group of weight-loss scientists and professionals.

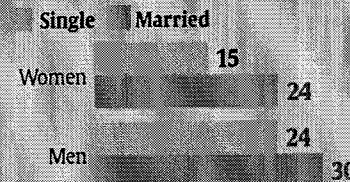
The study confirms other research that shows young adults are especially vulnerable to putting on pounds, and gaining weight is socially contagious.

"The weight gain in this age group is frightening," says Penny Gordon-Larsen, an assistant professor of nutrition in the school of public health at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

She has done other research on that age group and found that the number of

Marriage penalty

Average weight gain in pounds over a five-year period for people in their late teens and early 20s.



Source: University of North Carolina researchers

By Julie Snider, USA TODAY

Helping kids cut calories

■ Tiny steps OK; fast-food woes, 5D

people who become obese — 30 or more pounds over a healthy weight — increases significantly from the teens to young adulthood.

Gordon-Larsen and her colleagues followed almost 8,000 people, ages 12 to 28, over five years and a subsample of 1,200 couples. Among their findings:

► Women in their teens and early 20s who continued to date but didn't cohabitate gained an average of 15 pounds over five years; their male counterparts added about 24 pounds.

► Newly married women in that age group packed on 24 pounds in five years; newly married men gained 30 pounds.

That degree of gain wasn't seen in couples who were living together but not married. Women gained 3 pounds more than their single peers — 18 pounds — and men gained 24 pounds.

"When people are dating, there may be more incentive to be thin," Gordon-Larsen says.

Single young adults tend to be the most active, watch the least amount of TV and are the least likely to be obese, says Natalie The, a researcher at the University of North Carolina.

She says many factors probably contribute to couples' weight, including having children, post-pregnancy pounds, having less time to exercise and eating out more or cooking bigger meals.

A study released this summer showed that one person's obesity can significantly increase the chance that his or her friends, siblings and spouse also will become heavy, and if a person slims down, the people around him or her also may lose weight.

"Ideally, we'd like to shift the influence couples can have on each other to positive behaviors, so they can support each other to get to a healthy weight and maintain it," Gordon-Larsen says.

ing \$2.2 billion, by the end of year.

► Are likely to have difficulty finding an upcoming rate increase.

Loan market stressed

■ Far-reaching impact, 1F

and are unable to refinance. Countrywide will modify the loan rate that will keep borrowers' homes. The lender says it expects to modify 20,000 loans totaling \$4 billion through the end next year.

Those borrowers who fall behind because they've lost their job lack enough income to keep with a mortgage won't qualify.

► Had subprime credit but been making payments on. Countrywide will offer to refinance them into a lower-interest "prime" loan, or a mortgage insured by Federal Housing Administration. Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac lender estimates that about 5% of borrowers would qualify for a loan, and it expects to refinance \$10 billion in mortgages.

These borrowers, however, have to pay the fees to refinance their loans.

Josh Fuhrman, director of sales for the Homeowner Preservation Foundation, says, "There are a lot of new options coming out right now."

A lot of the other (loan) servicers are starting to be more flexible but (Countrywide's plan) is specific and looks on the surface pretty solid."

The mortgage industry is under pressure from politicians, regulators and consumer advocates to speed up and boost the number of loan modifications for homeowners in trouble.

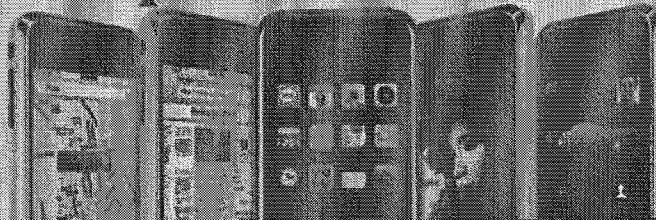
Last week, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson warned of an "immediate need" for more loan structurings and modification

For Apple, a bountiful quarter indeed

■ Company says strong sales of iPhones, iPods and computers account for record revenue, 1B

Shares: The iPhone helped Apple beat revenue projections.

Apple



morning like a whiff of hot breakfast.

riott Rewards. Unexpected comforts on the road.

