# One third of British teenagers overweight or obese, study finds



A recent study has revealed alarming statistics regarding the health of British teenagers, indicating that approximately one-third are now classified as overweight or obese. This significant rise, which represents an increase of 50 per cent over the past two decades, has raised concerns among health experts regarding the long-term implications for this age group, particularly in relation to chronic diseases and premature mortality.

Conducted by leading British researchers, the study attributes this growing prevalence of overweight and obesity among adolescents aged 12 to 17 to increasingly sedentary lifestyles, predominantly driven by excessive screen time. The findings were presented at the European Congress on Obesity held in Malaga, Spain, over the weekend.

Compounding factors for this trend include a substantial increase in the consumption of ultra-processed foods—products laden with artificial ingredients not typically found in a standard home kitchen. The research notably highlighted that the number of overweight and obese adolescents saw a remarkable spike during the Covid pandemic, likely due to reduced levels of physical activity coupled with rising mental health challenges that disrupted children’s dietary habits.

Dr Dinesh Giri, a consultant paediatric endocrinologist at Bristol Royal Hospital for Children and co-author of the study, expressed concern over the early onset of serious health conditions among affected adolescents. He highlighted that conditions such as type 2 diabetes and liver disease, previously more common in adults, are increasingly being diagnosed in younger populations. "Type 2 diabetes used to be an issue we'd primarily see in adults, but in the last decade we've seen a striking increase in the number of children, some as young as ten, developing it," Dr Giri noted.

He further stated, "When children get diabetes, or other serious weight-related conditions like liver disease, this will shorten their lifespan because it puts them at risk of serious health complications," emphasising the need for parental awareness regarding the health risks associated with childhood obesity.

The data indicates that in 2008, around one-fifth of adolescents were categorised as overweight or obese, a figure that has grown by 11 per cent to the current one-third over the 15-year period leading up to 2023. As a potential response to this growing public health concern, the UK Government announced a ban on television advertisements for junk food prior to 9pm, scheduled to take effect in October 2025.

In the discourse surrounding the factors influencing this trend, Dr Giri articulated how significant changes in children’s lifestyles have affected their physical activities. “There's been a significant change in the average child's lifestyle, it's something we can all see happening around us. Children no longer go out to play as much and instead spend their time looking at screens,” he elaborated. He also pointed to the unique impact of the Covid pandemic on adolescents, noting that other age groups did not experience similar surges in obesity levels during that time.

Overall, the findings underscore a critical public health issue, with potential long-term ramifications for the well-being of British adolescents as they transition into adulthood.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://bmjgroup.com/fastest-growth-in-childhood-overweight-obesity-in-england-among-11-15-year-olds/> - This article supports the claim of alarming rises in childhood obesity in England, particularly highlighting the significant growth among 11-15-year-olds. It also discusses the socioeconomic disparities in obesity prevalence.
2. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2024/09/one-in-eight-toddlers-and-primary-school-aged-children-obese/> - This NHS survey provides data on obesity rates among children in England, showing that one in eight toddlers and primary school-aged children are obese, which aligns with the broader trend of increasing obesity among young populations.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/update-to-the-obesity-profile-on-fingertips/obesity-profile-short-statistical-commentary-may-2024> - This government report details the prevalence of obesity among adults in England and highlights issues related to deprivation and age, which indirectly supports concerns about rising obesity rates across different age groups.
4. <https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)00022-0/fulltext> -
5. <Not available> - A specific study or publication from the European Congress on Obesity held in Malaga, Spain, was not found in the search results. This event likely presented research on obesity trends, but a direct link is not available.
6. <Not available> - No specific URL from Dr. Dinesh Giri or related research studies was found in the search results. However, his comments reflect concerns about the health impacts of rising obesity rates, which are well-documented in various public health studies.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14603451/one-three-british-teenagers-obese-new-study.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data