TuSalud

Obesity on the Rise Among NYC Latino Students

Childhood obesity can lead to high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes and more.

May 31, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

In recent years, Latino and Black public school students in New York City experienced some of the greatest increases in childhood obesity despite an overall decrease in prevalence, according to a new Duke University study published in PLOS ONE.

Childhood obesity is a major public health concern affecting nearly one in five U.S. children and teens, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Latino and Black youth experience high rates of obesity, which research attributes in part to factors such as poverty, lack of access to healthy foods and single-parent households.

Childhood obesity can lead to serious chronic health conditions, including type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, liver disease and more. Indeed, a recent study found that Latino children with unreliable access to food at age 4 are nearly four times more likely to develop metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) later in childhood.

The Duke University study included data on nearly 1.4 million New York City public school students ages 5 to 15, according to a news release. Results showed that the overall proportion of students with obesity (20.9%) and severe obesity (6.4%) in the 2019–2020 school year decreased slightly compared with previous years.

While the overall prevalence of obesity declined from 2011–2012 to 2019–2020, obesity and severe obesity increased among Latino and Black students and children living in low-income neighborhoods, who already have a higher prevalence of obesity.

A separate study found that about 2.5% of all preschool-aged children enrolled in a nutrition program focusing on low-income families had severe obesity at the time of observation. What's more, Latino children had the highest rate of obesity, at about 2.8%. For comparison, in 2010, the

rate of severe obesity in this group of kids was about 2.1%. By 2016, the rate had dropped to 1.8%, but by 2020, it had increased to 2%.

Researchers emphasize the need for increased equity-centered obesity prevention efforts to combat these health disparities.

To read more, click #Childhood Obesity. There, you'll find headlines such as "Food Insecurity in Latino Children May Boost Liver Disease Risk," "Childhood Stress Linked to Poorer Heart Health in Adults" and "Severe Obesity on the Rise in Young Latino Children."

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.tusaludmag.com/article/obesity-rise-among-nyc-latino-students