

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](#)."

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