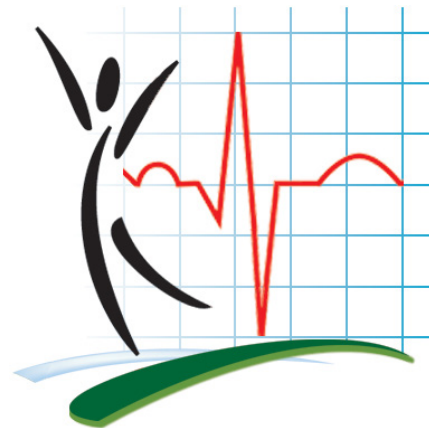


Health Fact Sheets

Overweight and obese youth (self-reported), 2013



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- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
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- 0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- ^P preliminary
- ^r revised
- X suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- ^E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- * significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Overweight and obese youth (self-reported), 2013

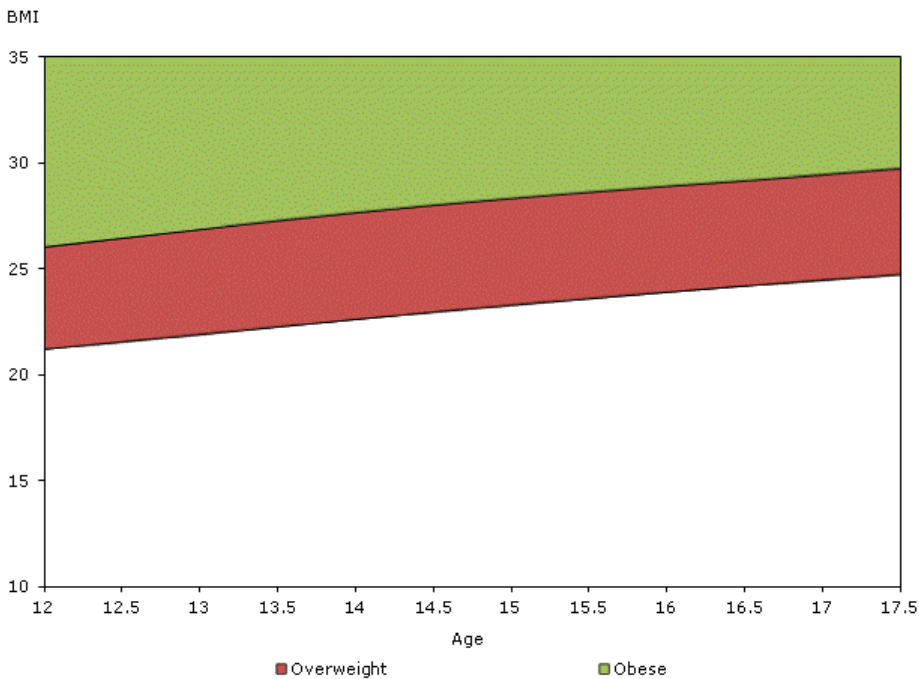
Excess weight in childhood has been linked to insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, poor emotional health, and diminished social well-being. As well, obese children tend to become obese adults, making childhood obesity a public health concern.¹



Body Mass Index (BMI), a measure that examines weight in relation to height is a tool used to evaluate whether a person is a healthy weight. BMI (Body Mass Index) is defined as weight in kilograms divided by the square of the height in meters.

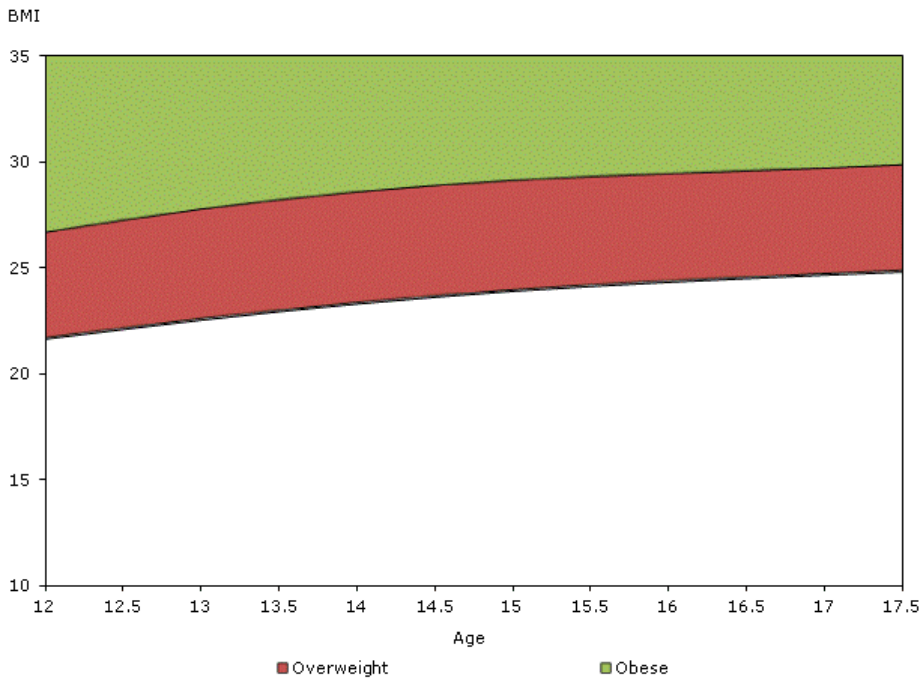
The Canadian Community Health Survey has used the Cole classification system since 2001 for the youth body mass index indicator. This classification is based on pooled international data and classifies children aged 12 to 17 as "obese", "overweight" or "neither obese nor overweight" according to age-and-sex specific BMI (Body Mass Index) cut-off points (Charts 1.1 & 1.2).²

Chart 1.1
BMI ranges for overweight and obese for selected ages, boys (Cole classification system)



Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2013.

Chart 1.2
BMI ranges for overweight and obese for selected ages,
girls (Cole classification system)



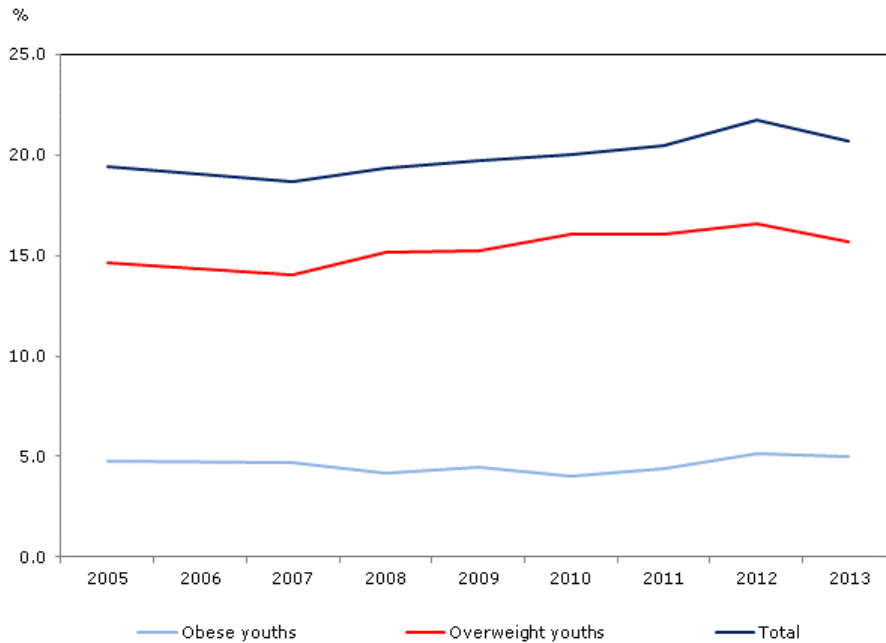
Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2013.

In 2013, 5.0% of Canadians aged 12-17, roughly 102,000 youths, reported height and weight that classified them as obese. The percentage of those who were overweight was 15.7%, or roughly 320,000 youths. Combined, roughly one in five youths aged 12-17 was overweight or obese in 2013 (Chart 2).

The proportion of youths with excess weight, either obese or overweight, has remained relatively stable since 2008. However, it is a significant increase from 18.7% in 2007 (Chart 2).

When those who were classified as obese were combined with those who were overweight, 20.7% of youths had an increased risk because of excess weight.

Chart 2
Percentage who were obese and overweight (self-reported), Cole classification, household population aged 12 to 17, Canada, 2005 to 2013



Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2005, 2007-2013.

Having excess weight did not have an effect on the reported physical activity of youths in 2013. Of the 12-17 year olds who were overweight or obese, 70.9% reported being physically active or moderately active in leisure time. This was not significantly different from the 75.0% of youths who were not overweight or obese.³ 'Moderately active' would be equivalent to walking at least 30 minutes a day or taking an hour-long exercise class at least three times a week.

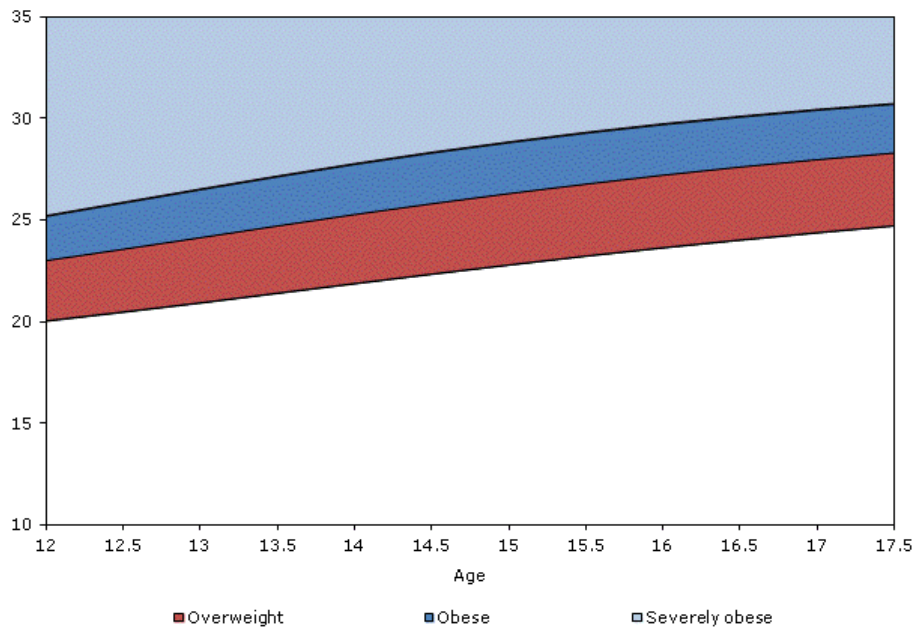
World Health Organization classification⁴ gives higher level of obese youth in 2013

A new classification for overweight and obese youths has been added to the Canadian Community Health Survey files as of 2013. This new classification is based on BMI (Body Mass Index) thresholds used by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The thresholds for the WHO (World Health Organization) classification are also based on pooled data⁵, but are lower than those used under the Cole classification system. The lower thresholds of this classification result in more youths classified as overweight or obese. The WHO (World Health Organization) classification also has an additional category; obese youth are classified as either obese or severely obese (Charts 3.1 & 3.2).

Chart 3.1
BMI ranges for overweight, obese, and severely obese,
boys (WHO classification system)

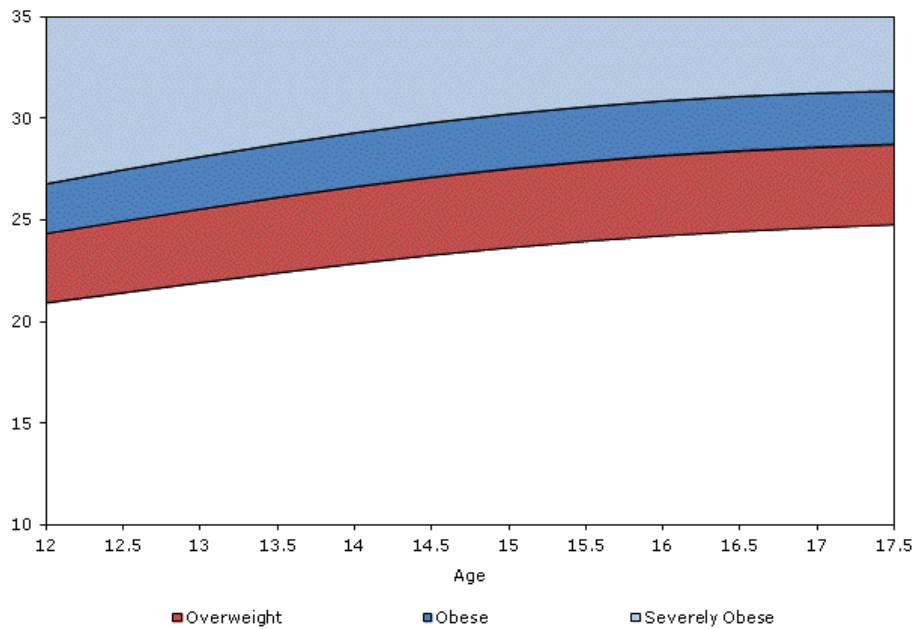
BMI



Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2013.

Chart 3.2
BMI ranges for overweight, obese, and severely obese,
girls (WHO classification system)

BMI



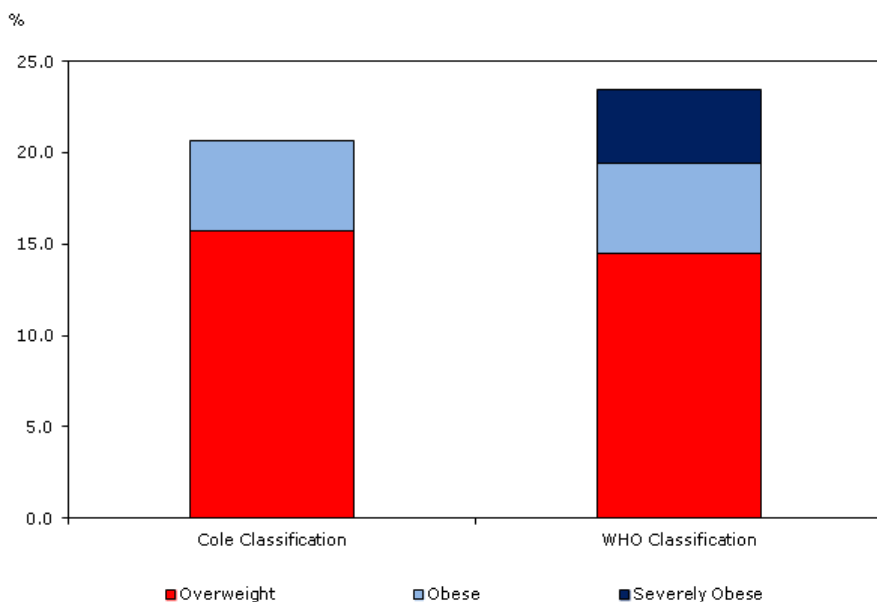
Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2013.

In 2013, 477,633 (23.4%) youths aged 12-17 were considered to have excess weight under the WHO (World Health Organization) classification, significantly higher than the 421,350 (20.7%) under the Cole classification.

The proportion of youth classified as overweight is similar for both classifications; approximately 15%. However, using the WHO (World Health Organization) classification, 9.0% of 12-17 year olds are obese, significantly higher than the 5.0% using the Cole classification (Chart 4).

Under the WHO classification, youths in the obese category can be further broken down into those who are severely obese. In 2013, 5.0% of youths were obese and 4.0% were severely obese (Chart 4).

Chart 4
Percentage of severely obese¹, obese, and overweight youths, by Cole and WHO classifications, household population aged 12 to 17, Canada, 2013

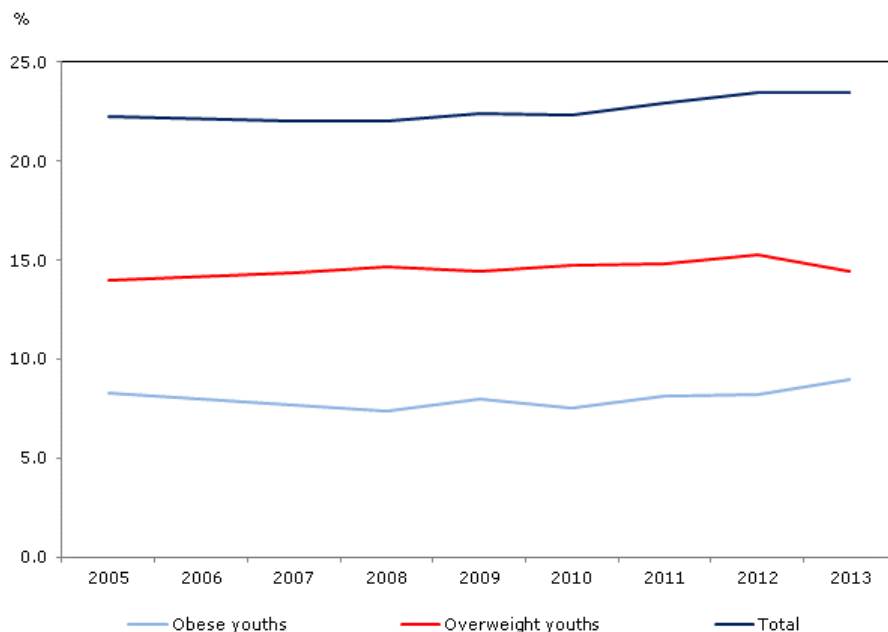


Note: 1. The Cole classification only has one category for obese. This should be compared to the combined obese and severely obese categories under the WHO classification.

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2013.

Under the WHO (World Health Organization) classification, the proportion of youths who were obese has been relatively stable since 2005. However, the proportion of obese youth was significantly higher in 2013 (9.0%) than in 2008 (7.4%). The proportion of overweight youths was not significantly different in 2013 from any previous year (Chart 5).

Chart 5
Percentage who were obese and overweight
(self-reported), WHO classification, household
population aged 12 to 17, Canada, 2005 to 2013



Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2005, 2007-2013.

End notes

- 1 Roberts, Karen C, Margot Shields, Margaret de Groh, Alfred Aziz and Jo-Anne Gilbert. 2012. "Overweight and obesity in children and adolescents: Results from the 2009 to 2011 Canadian Health Measures Survey." *Health Reports*. Vol. (volume)23, no. (number) 3. September. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. (number) 82-003. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2012003/article/11706-eng.pdf> (accessed May 10, 2010).
- 2 Note: Excluded from the classification are females aged 15-17 who were pregnant or who did not answer if they were pregnant. There is no 'underweight' or 'normal weight' in this classification. Youths with a BMI (Body Mass Index) below the low cut-off for being classified as overweight are indicated as "neither overweight nor obese" See: Tim J Cole, Mary C Bellizzi, Katherine M. Flegal, William H Dietz. 2000. "Establishing a Standard Definition for Child Overweight and Obesity Worldwide – International survey". *British Medical Journal*, Volume: 320, May 2000.
- 3 The Cole classification designates youths as either overweight or obese or neither. Those classified as neither overweight nor obese would be those with a BMI (Body Mass Index) below the lower limit for the overweight category.
- 4 The World Health Organization classification of youth BMI (Body Mass Index) has been added to the CCHS data files in 2013. The reason for adding this new variable was to provide researchers with another tool that is increasingly useful for international comparisons. The WHO (World Health Organization) system also excludes females aged 15-17 who were pregnant or did not answer if they were pregnant.
- 5 de Onis M, Onyango AW, Borghi E, et al. Development of a WHO (World Health Organization) growth reference for school-aged children and adolescents. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 2007; 85(9): 660-7.

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Data

Additional data from the Canadian Community Health Survey are available from CANSIM table [105–0501](#).