

Childhood obesity peaks between ages 7 and 11

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Childhood obesity is common and hard to prevent but by identifying when it is most likely to occur, measures can be taken at key stages of childhood or adolescence to prevent it developing.

This is the key finding of a new study by researchers from the universities of Bristol, Stirling and Strathclyde, published online by [Preventive Medicine](#). It shows that British children are most susceptible to becoming overweight and obese during mid-late childhood (age seven to 11 years).

The researchers tracked the body weight and height of nearly 5,000 children taking part in Children of the 90s, also known as the Avon [Longitudinal Study](#) of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), from birth until the age of 15.

They found that the number of children who changed from a healthy weight to being overweight and obese was much higher between the ages seven to 11 years (19 per cent), than between ages three to seven years (ten per cent) or 11 to 15 years (seven per cent).

Professor John Reilly of the University of Strathclyde said: ‘This research gives us an important insight into the stages of childhood and adolescence when the environment is most [obesity](#) promoting.’

Dr Adrienne Hughes, University of Stirling, added: ‘This research is consistent with our other recent study which showed that most excess weight gain occurs by mid-late childhood.’

Professor Debbie Lawlor of the University of Bristol concluded: ‘These recent findings from ALSPAC suggest that mid-late childhood may be the best bet for [childhood obesity](#) prevention.’

More information: www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription#description

Provided by University of Bristol

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