

# South Asian boys are more likely to be overweight compared to peers, new study finds

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South Asian boys are three times as likely to be overweight compared to their peers, according to a new Women's College Hospital study.

The report, which was recently published in the *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, was one of the first to look at ethnic group differences in [overweight children](#) living in Canada.

"Our findings are alarming. From a young age, South Asian boys appear to be on a path towards developing serious health conditions," said Ananya Banerjee, PhD, lead researcher of the study.

Previous work has established that, in Canada, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases are more prevalent among South Asian adults, compared to non-South Asian populations. Being [overweight](#) or obese increases an individual's risk of developing these conditions.

In this study, researchers measured the heights and weights of 734 Toronto students between the ages of 10 and 12 years. Researchers tracked each participant's [physical activity](#) during selected times over seven days and considered socio-demographic factors—including household income, highest level of education attained by parents living in the household and median household income.

Key findings include:

- Overall, the likelihood of being overweight was higher in populations of South Asian children (36.9 per cent), compared to non-South Asian populations (23.0 per cent)
- The median number of minutes per day spent engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity was lower in South Asian children (24.1 minutes) compared to non-South Asian children (28.9 minutes)
- Even after adjusting for socio-demographic and behavioral factors, the likelihood of being overweight was significantly higher among South Asian boys compared to non-South Asian boys

"It's likely that cultural perceptions around being overweight—in addition to exercise and diet—are contributing to the trends we are seeing," says Banerjee.

The study authors also highlight the need for future public health initiatives directed at South Asian populations, particularly [children](#).

Provided by Women's College Hospital

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