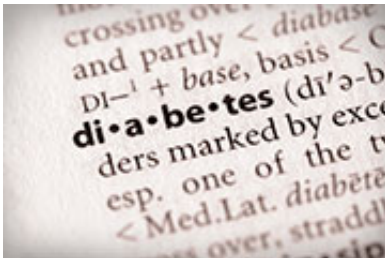


# Adopting US culture ups diabetes risk in Mexican-American kids

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Greater use of English and more non-Hispanic friends increased risk of disease, study finds.

(HealthDay)—The more that Mexican-American children adopt mainstream U.S. culture, the greater their risk for type 2 diabetes, a new study suggests.

Researchers looked at almost 150 Mexican-American children from North Texas. The kids were between the ages of 10 and 14. The researchers assessed how integrated the children were with U.S. culture by looking at things such as whether they spoke English, watched English-language TV shows and movies, preferred reading, writing and thinking in English, and had non-Hispanic white friends.

As children adapted to a more American way of life, their risk of [diabetes](#) increased by about 43 percent for each level of what the researchers called "acculturation."

The findings show the need for further research, according to principal investigator Kimberly Fulda, an associate professor of family medicine at the University of North Texas Health Science Center.

"Child obesity and [type 2 diabetes](#) is a serious and growing [health](#) epidemic, especially among the Hispanic population," she said in a university news release.

"The results of this study show how important it is for us to explore the factors that are causing this disparity and find ways to promote good health among [children](#)," Fulda added.

Though researchers only found an association, and reasons for the link are unknown, Fulda said factors such as fast-food consumption, sedentary behavior, fresh produce intake, [parental education](#) and parental acculturation should be studied more closely.

A national study estimated that the rate of type 2 diabetes among American teens is expected to rise 49 percent by 2050, and 50 percent of those teens will likely be Hispanic, according to the researchers.

**More information:** The U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion outlines how you can [prevent type 2 diabetes](#).

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