

# Child obesity rates drop in Canada

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(HealthDay)—The percentage of Canadian children who are overweight or obese is declining, a new Canadian study shows.

"Despite a welcome decline in the rates of [overweight children](#) and a plateau in obesity, we can't become complacent," said lead researcher Dr. Celia Rodd, from the Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba, in Winnipeg. "We must continue to focus on measures to encourage children and their families to maintain healthy weights."

Childhood obesity rates are at a standstill in the United States.

One reason for the decline in the percentage of Canadian children who are overweight or obese may be the introduction of [body mass index](#) (BMI) growth charts in 2000, the researchers said. BMI is an estimate of body fat based on weight and height.

The study authors suggested that these charts may have made it easier for [health care providers](#) to discuss children's weight issues with parents.

Also, there's increased public awareness about the issue of children's weight, the researchers added.

"Unfortunately, Canadian children are still relatively heavy," Rodd and her colleague, Dr. Atul Sharma, reported.

For the study, the investigators looked at data from the Canadian Community Health Survey and the Canadian Health Measures Survey. The findings showed that rates of overweight/obesity among [children](#) aged 2 to 17 rose from just over 23 percent in 1978 to nearly 35 percent in 2004, but rates among those aged 3 to 19 fell from almost 31 percent in 2004 to 27 percent in 2013.

The study was published May 9 in the *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

**More information:** Paper:

[www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.150854](http://www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.150854)

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [childhood obesity](#).

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