

# Autism spectrum disorders linked with excess weight gain in children

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A recent meta-analysis published in *Obesity Reviews* revealed that children with autism spectrum disorders had a 41.1% higher risk of developing obesity than matched groups of children, and on average, 22

out of 100 children with autism were found to have obesity.

The analysis, which examined results from relevant published studies, also found that [children](#) with [autism spectrum disorders](#) who were of non-Caucasian race, older in age, female, and living in the United States had especially higher rates of overweight or obesity.

"Neurobehavioral abnormalities related to autism, and more importantly, our treatment decisions may contribute to excessive weight gain in children with autism," said lead author Chanaka Kahathuduwa, MD (MBBS), Ph.D., of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

"Clinicians as well as parents need to be made aware of this greater risk to prevent our children with autism from being victims of obesity and its devastating complications."

**More information:** Chanaka N. Kahathuduwa et al, The risk of overweight and obesity in children with autism spectrum disorders: A systematic review and meta-analysis, *Obesity Reviews* (2019). DOI: [10.1111/obr.12933](https://doi.org/10.1111/obr.12933)

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