

Sweden sees rise in diabetes among young children: Report

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Diabetes diagnoses among children under five have risen in recent years, a charity supporting diabetes research said Tuesday, adding that the COVID-19 pandemic could be an explanation.

A new [report](#) by Barndiabetesfonden (The Child Diabetes Fund) said that 460 children in Sweden were treated for type 1 diabetes in 2022, up from 283 in 2018, a 62 percent increase.

Almost a third of the children needed [intensive care](#) when they fell ill, Barndiabetesfonden said in a statement.

Type 1 diabetes, previously referred to as [juvenile diabetes](#), is a chronic autoimmune condition where the body does not produce any insulin, whereas the more common type 2 diabetes is a condition where the body does not produce enough insulin.

"It is frightening that type 1 diabetes is creeping down in age. It's something we need to think about how to deal with, both in research and in health care," researcher Ake Lernmark said in a report published by the [charity](#).

The organization said it was a well-known fact that viral illnesses often preceded type 1 diabetes, and noted that the current Swedish increase coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic.

It also said studies had shown that young children who contracted COVID-19 were more likely to develop type 1 diabetes if the mother had never had COVID prior to the child's birth.

If the mother had the infection or was vaccinated the risks were lower.

"In some of the children, COVID-19 likely triggered the development of a first antibody," Lernmark said in the report.

The report added that even before the pandemic, the number of cases of type 1 diabetes had been on the rise, and the slow increase that could be observed in the decades leading up to the [pandemic](#) was believed to be

related to other cold viruses.

It said that the link between diabetes cases and COVID-19 would likely subside as more people become immune.

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