

Total dietary quality score improved for U.S. children during 2005 to 2020, study shows

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Total dietary scores improved for U.S. children during 2005 to 2020, with increases for all diet adequacy components, apart from dairy, according to a [research letter](#) published online July 8 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Guodong Ding, Ph.D., M.D., from Xinhua Hospital at the Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine, and colleagues conducted a cross-sectional study to examine trends in [diet quality](#) between 2005 to 2006 and 2017 to 2020 among U.S. children aged 12 to 23 months who were no longer receiving human milk or [infant formula](#). Data were included from 1,404 children (mean age, 17.6 months).

The researchers found that overall, total scores of dietary quality improved from a mean of 53.0 to 56.5 from 2005-2006 to 2017-2020 (increase of 3.5). Among non-Hispanic Black children, this trend was consistent and stronger (increase of 7.8 points).

Among most diet adequacy components, including total vegetables, [whole grains](#), total protein foods, seafood and plant proteins, and [fatty acids](#), individual scores increased, with significant findings for all trends. However, there was a decrease in the mean score of dairy (0.58-point decrease). Similar findings were seen in sensitivity analyses performed after adjustment for race and ethnicity and sex.

"Although total dietary quality scores among U.S. children improved overall during 2005 to 2020, the increase remained suboptimal: lower than 5 points, a significant threshold for children," the authors write.

More information: Guodong Ding et al, Diet Quality Among Children, *JAMA Pediatrics* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2024.1880](#)

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