

The HBSC Ireland Team, Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway*Overall percentages for HBSC 2014 and HBSC 2010 in this factsheet have been weighted²*

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is a research study conducted by an international network of research teams¹ in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (Europe) and co-ordinated by Dr Joanna Inchley of the University of St Andrews. This factsheet is based on data collected in 2014 from 10,368 10-17 year olds in Ireland from randomly selected schools throughout the country.

Further information is available at:
<http://www.hbsc.org>
<http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc>

**Summary**

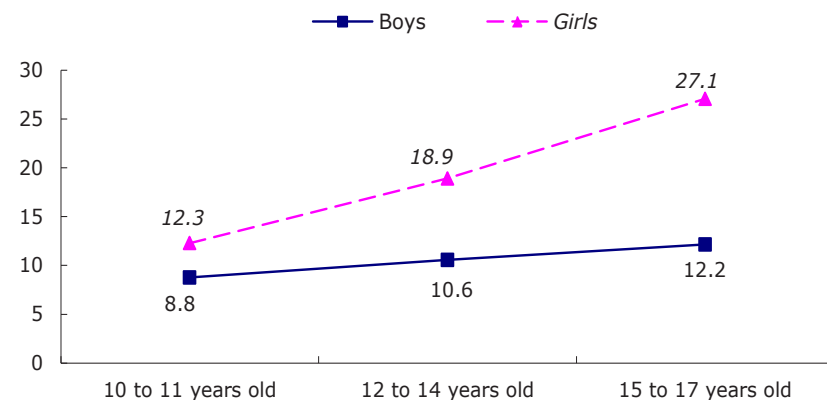
Dieting in this factsheet refers to children who report that they are on a diet or doing something to lose weight at present. The 2014 HBSC Ireland study has found that 16.2% of children report that they are currently dieting (10.9% of boys and 21.1% of girls). The proportion of children who report dieting has increased slightly since 2010 (13.2%). The proportion of children who report dieting is higher in older children than younger children (10.9% of 10-11 year olds, 15.3% of 12-14 year olds and 21.0% of 15-17 year olds). Those who live with both parents and those who find it easy to talk to their mother, father and best friend about things that really bother them are less likely to report currently dieting. Those who report feeling pressured by schoolwork are more likely to report dieting, as are those from lower social class groups.

Why this topic?

Weight reducing behaviour is common among schoolchildren, both in those who are normal weight and overweight^{3,4}. Dieting is associated with poorer dietary quality intake in schoolchildren⁴. Unhealthy dieting methods are also associated with negative physical and psychological outcomes⁵.

Change 2010-2014

The proportion of children who report dieting has increased slightly from 13.2% in 2010 to 16.2% in 2014. There is a slight increase in the proportion of girls who report dieting since 2010 (16.9% 2010; 21.1% 2014), with rates remaining stable in boys (9.7% 2010; 10.9% 2014). There is a slight increase in dieting among boys aged 15-17 years (9.6% in 2010; 12.2% in 2014), and in girls from all age groups, particularly among 15-17 year olds (21.6% in 2010; 27.1% in 2014).

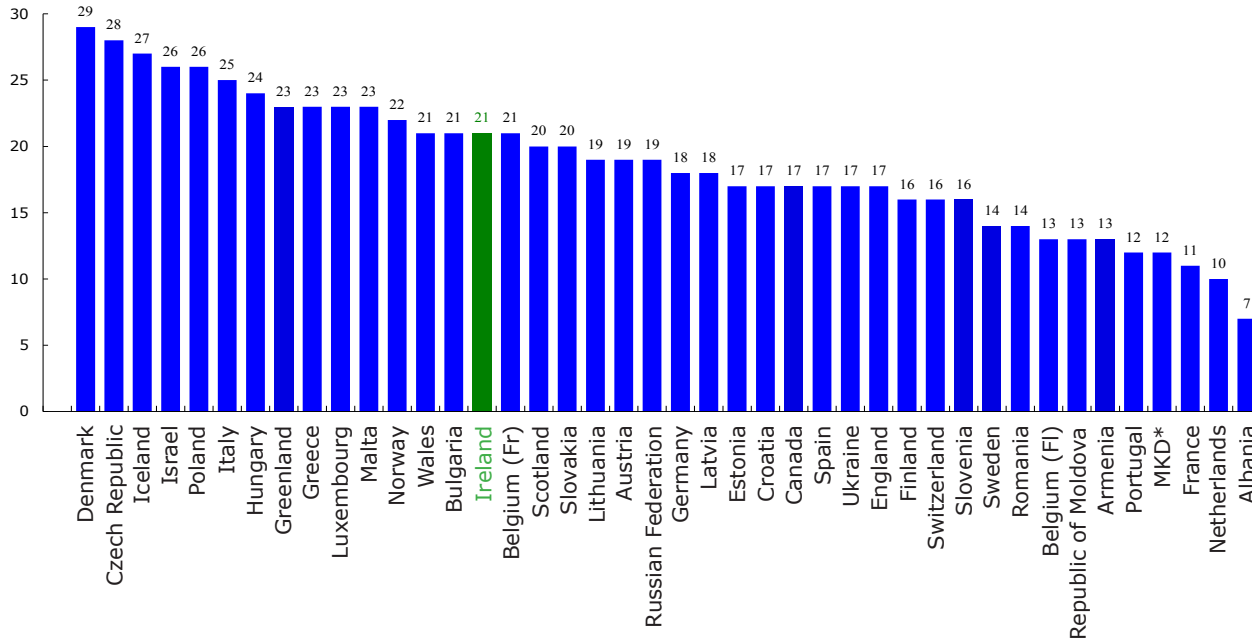


Percentage of children reporting they are on a diet, by age and gender

Dieting in context

- Children from lower social class groups are more likely to report dieting than those from higher social class groups (16.5% in social classes 1-2; 17.6% in social classes 3-4; 20.0% in social classes 5-6).
- Children who report living with both parents are less likely to report dieting (71.9% vs 77.0%).
- Children who report finding it easy to talk to their mother (74.7% vs 83.8%), father (58.5% vs 70.4%) and best friend (86.6% vs 89.5%) about things that really bother them are less likely to report dieting.
- Children who report liking school are less likely to report dieting (64.8% vs 74.4%) and those who report feeling pressured by their schoolwork are more likely to report dieting (56.1% vs 40.3%).

...DiETING behaviour among schoolchildren in Ireland



Percentage of 15 year old children reporting they are on a diet, by country

*MKD - The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

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We would like to thank all the children, teachers and schools who participated and acknowledge the contribution of our colleagues in the Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway.

All factsheets and other HBSC publications and reports can be downloaded from our website: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc>

Contact us at: hbcs@nuigalway.ie

International

Fifteen year old schoolchildren in Ireland (boys and girls together) are ranked 15th among 42 countries in Europe and North America with 21.1% reporting that they are on a diet. Overall, children in Ireland are ranked 28th among 11 year olds (12.2% report being on a diet) and 24th among 13 year olds (15.8% report being on a diet)¹.

Implications

The proportion of schoolchildren in Ireland who report dieting has increased slightly since 2010. For 15 year olds, Ireland ranks in 15th position in comparison to other European and North American countries that took part in HBSC 2014. The findings in this factsheet suggest that having a good relationship with parent(s) and close friends may

protect against dieting behaviour. Given the potential detrimental effects of dieting behaviour, it is important to support healthy balanced eating habits and to inform schoolchildren on the dangers associated with unhealthy weight control practices.

References

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