

Childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century. The problem is global and is steadily affecting many low- and middle-income countries, particularly in urban settings. The prevalence has increased at an alarming rate. Globally, in 2013 the number of overweight children under the age of five, is estimated to be over 42 million. Close to 31 million of these are living in developing countries.

Overweight and obese children are likely to stay obese into adulthood and more likely to develop noncommunicable diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases at a younger age. Overweight and obesity, as well as their related diseases, are largely preventable. Prevention of childhood obesity therefore needs high priority.

The WHO Member States in the 66th World Health Assembly agreed on a voluntary global NCD target to halt the rise in diabetes and obesity.

[Read more on childhood overweight and obesity](#)

[Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity](#)

Related report

[Report on the Expert consultation on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children in the Eastern Mediterranean Region Amman, Jordan 18–19 September 2013](#)

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