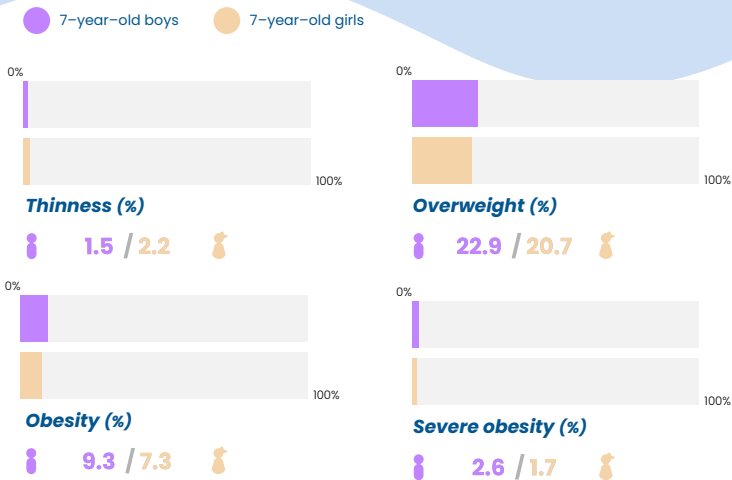


WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI) in Ukraine 2023–2024



WHO European COSI – Ukraine

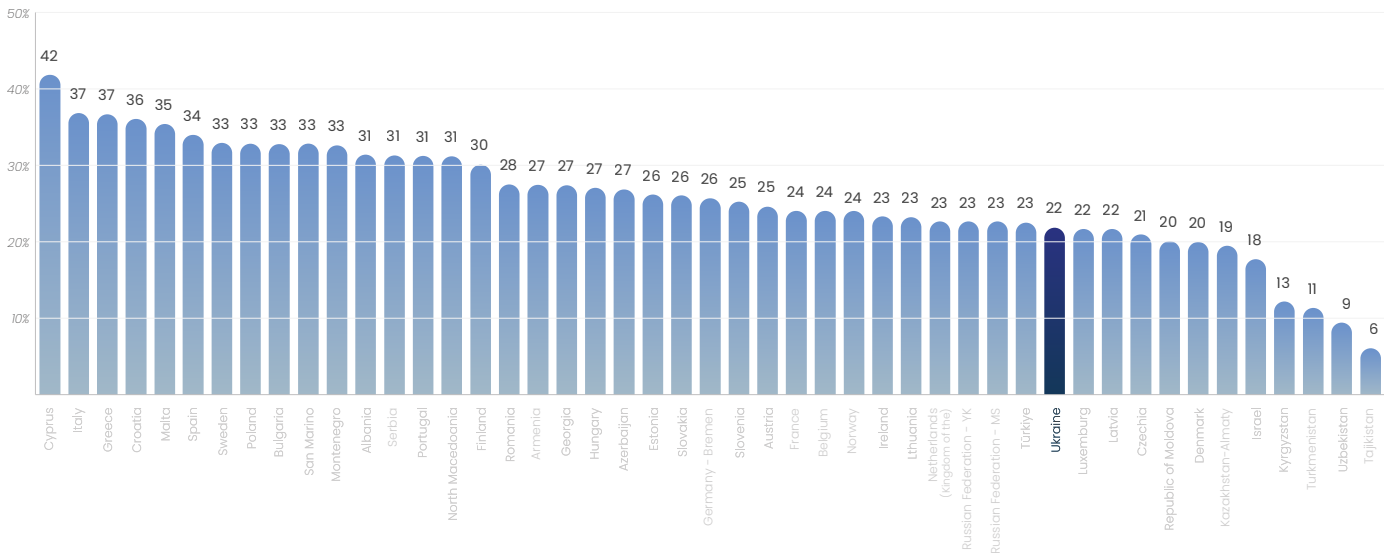
First- and second-grade primary school children (6–8 years)



While 90% of children have received some breast milk, this percentage drops to 59% when considering exclusive breastfeeding, with only about one in four exclusively breastfed for six months or longer ⁽¹⁾.

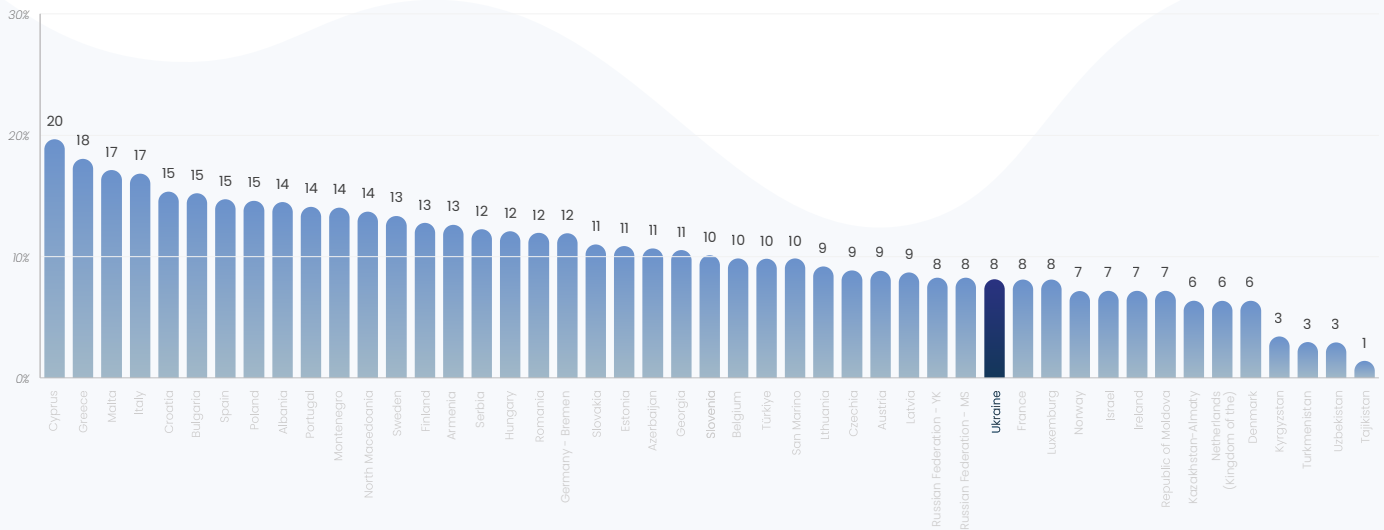
Prevalence of overweight ⁽²⁾ (including obesity) in children aged 7–9 years (%); COSI round 6 (2022–2024)

COSI average estimate: 25%



Prevalence of obesity ⁽²⁾ in children aged 7–9 years (%); COSI round 6 (2022–2024)

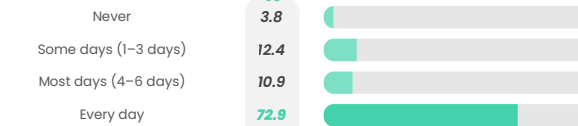
COSI average estimate: 11%



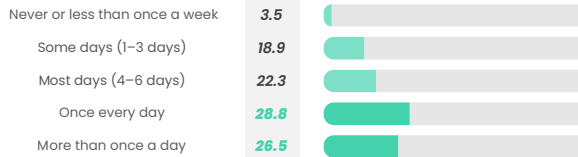
⁽¹⁾ Around 15% of respondents did not remember if the child was exclusive breastfed or not.
⁽²⁾ Data relate to: (i) 7-year-olds in Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Türkiye, Ukraine and Uzbekistan; (ii) 8-year-olds in Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Germany (Bremen federal state only), Italy, Kazakhstan (Almaty only), Poland, San Marino and Sweden; and (iii) 9-year-olds in Cyprus.

Healthy food habits

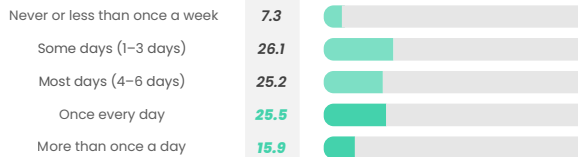
Having breakfast



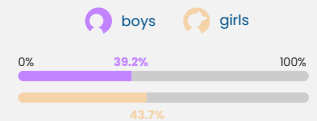
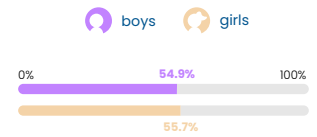
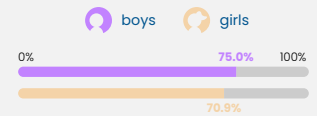
Fresh fruits consumption



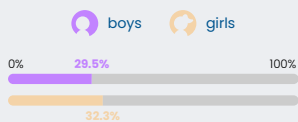
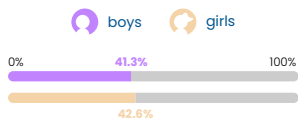
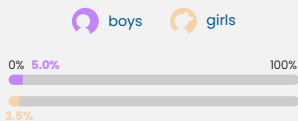
Vegetable consumption



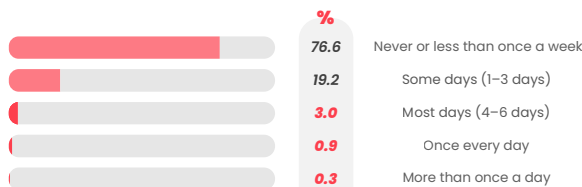
Daily consumption among boys and girls



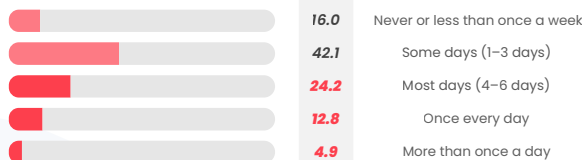
Frequent consumption among boys and girls (more than 3 days/week)



Unhealthy food habits



Savoury snack consumption



Sweet snack consumption



Soft drinks consumption

Physical activity



Going to and/or from school walking or cycling

60.9%



Practising sport for at least 2 hours a week

62.1%



Actively/vigorously playing for at least 1 hour a day

94.0% weekdays
94.3% weekend



Watching TV or using electronic devices for at least 2 hours a day

54.4% weekdays
83.4% weekend



Sleeping at least 9 hours per night

83.6%

Screen time

Sleep time

Highlights

In 2023–2024, just over one in five children aged 7 years in Ukraine were living with overweight or obesity (21.9%). Obesity affected 8% of children, while less than 2% were classified as thin. Boys were less likely than girls to be in the "healthy weight" category (75.6% versus 77.1%).

More than half of primary school-aged children consumed fresh fruit every day (55.3%), while daily vegetable consumption was lower (41.4%). When considering the number of portions of fruit and/or vegetables consumed per day, only 1 in 10 children had at least 3 portions, and less than 1% met the recommendation of at least 5 portions.

Over 40% of children consumed sweet snacks every day (17.7%) or most days (24.2%) of the week. The consumption of savoury snacks was less common, with 3 out of 4 children rarely or sporadically eating this type of food. Every fifth child drank soft drinks daily.

Regarding screen time, 54.4% of children watched television or used electronic devices for at least 2 hours per day during the week, with approximately 83.4% doing the same on weekends.

Almost all children engaged in active or vigorous play for at least 1 hour a day.

Six out of 10 children walked or cycled to and from school (60.9%), and a similar proportion participated in at least 2 hours of sports per week (62.1%).

Policy implications

Governments have a key role in creating healthy food and physical activity environments. This requires a comprehensive approach, including the promotion of healthy diets and physical activity among children of all ages, as well as preconception and pregnancy care and the provision of weight management services, as part of universal health coverage. Policy actions to combat the burden of malnutrition may include:

- fiscal interventions (sugar-sweetened beverage taxation)
- encouraging the reformulation of foods high in fat, sugar and salt
- implementing marketing restrictions on unhealthy products (especially for children)
- front-of-pack labelling schemes
- initiatives to create opportunities for physical activity and active travel (including urban planning).

Schools play a key role in addressing the double burden of malnutrition through the provision of healthy meals, education on healthy nutrition and physical activity (including the provision of facilities for physical activity), and providing links to the broader community.

Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and appropriate complementary feeding are key to preventing obesity and overweight. Implementing the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative and the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes can support good nutrition.

As obesity and overweight in the WHO European Region rise, it will be essential to build capacity for the management of overweight and obesity in primary care and among health workers.

About COSI

The WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI), established in 2007, has been measuring trends in overweight and obesity among primary school-aged children for over 15 years. Based on a common protocol, it collects nationally representative data from children aged 6–9 years through standardized measurements of body weight and height and additional data on dietary intake, physical activity, sedentary behaviour, family background, and school environments.

Participation in COSI has grown from 13 countries in 2007 to 48 countries in 2024, making it the largest childhood obesity surveillance initiative globally. The sixth round, conducted from 2022–2024, measured around 470 000 children in 37 countries within the Region. In Ukraine, 187 primary schools were included in the study, and more 3500 children enrolled in first and second grades were measured. Additionally, more than 3600 families participated by filling out a questionnaire about their children's eating habits, physical activity patterns and sedentary behaviours.

Data from COSI play a key role in defining the obesity problem, informing action, making international comparisons, and tracking progress over time.

The Special Initiative on Noncommunicable Diseases and Innovation of the WHO European Region and the WHO Country Office in Ukraine are committed to supporting countries to take comprehensive, integrated, multisectoral action to halt the rise of childhood obesity in the Region.

Acknowledgments

The Child Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI) survey 2023–2024 was successfully conducted as part of a collaborative effort by the Ukraine Public Health Centre, the WHO Regional Office for Europe, and the WHO Country Office in Ukraine. The Ministry of Health of Ukraine and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine provided invaluable support in facilitating the survey. Special recognition is also extended to the Ukrainian Institute for Social Research after O. Yaremenko for their expertise and dedication in conducting the survey. The COSI survey in Ukraine was carried out within the framework of the Act4health Project, led by GFA Consulting Group, and made possible through the generous financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

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