

Mary Callaghan and the HBSC Ireland Team, Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway

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 Professor Candace Currie of the University of St Andrews. This factsheet is based on data collected in 2010 from 12,661 10-17 year olds in Ireland from randomly selected schools throughout the country.

Further information is available at:
<http://www.hbhc.org>
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Summary

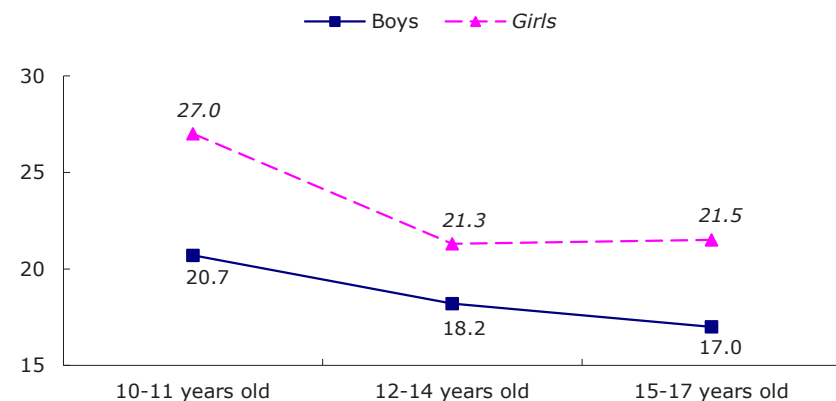
HBSC Ireland 2010 has found that 20.1% of schoolchildren in Ireland report consuming fruit every day more than once (18.0% of boys and 22.2% of girls). This figure has remained stable since 2006 (19.4%). The percentage of children who consume fruit daily more than once is higher among younger children; 20.7% of boys and 27.0% of girls aged 10-11 years vs. 17.0% of boys and 21.5% of girls aged 15-17 years. Children who consume fruit more than once daily are more likely to live with both parents, find it easy to talk to their parents or best friend and to like school. They are less likely to spend four or more evenings with friends or to report feeling pressured by school. Fruit consumption in this factsheet refers to children who report consuming fruit every day more than once.

Why this topic?

Fruit provides nutrients which are vital for a healthy body. Many children and adolescents do not eat the recommended quantity of fruit². A diet rich in fruit and vegetables has been found to have a positive effect on weight management³ and disease prevention^{4,5}. Previous research has indicated that adult dietary behaviours are established throughout childhood and adolescence⁶, emphasising the importance of promoting fruit consumption in children.

Change 2006-2010

The overall percentage of children who report consuming fruit more than once daily has remained stable between 2006 (19.4%) and 2010 (20.1%). There has been a slight increase in the number of boys aged 10-11 years who report consuming fruit more than once every day from 18.2% in 2006 to 20.7% in 2010. The prevalence of fruit consumption continues to be higher among girls than boys (22.2% vs. 18.0%).



Percentage of children who report consuming fruit everyday, more than once, by age and gender

Fruit consumption in context

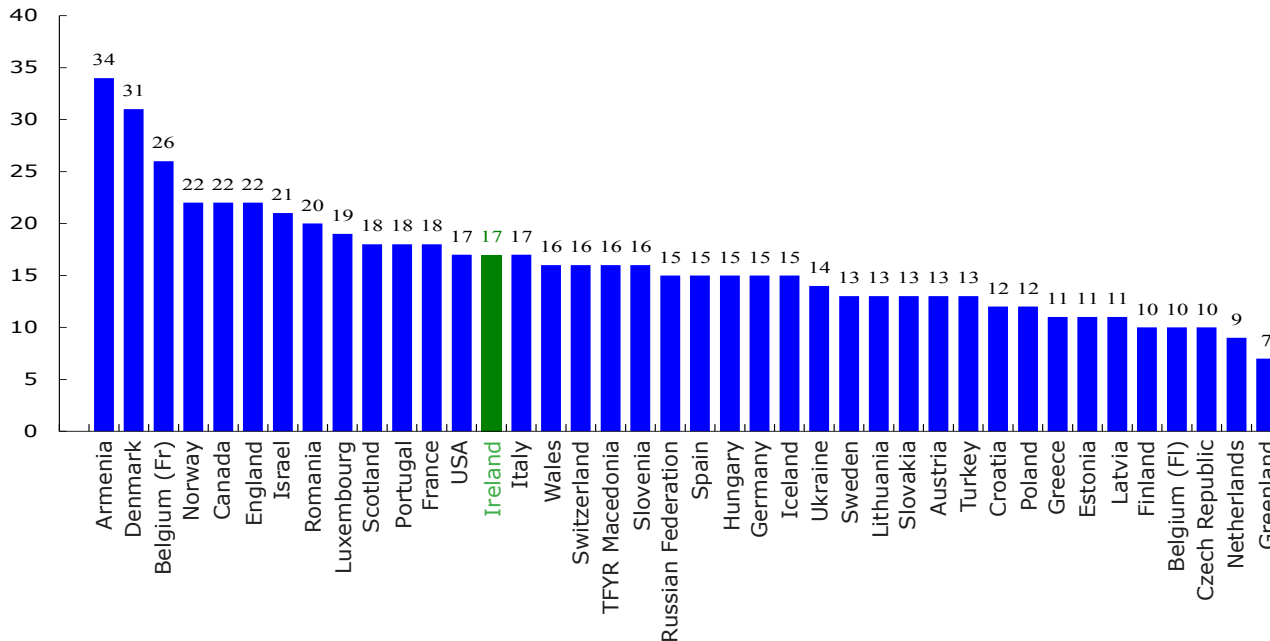
- Children from higher social classes are more likely to report consuming fruit more than once daily (social classes 1-2: 23.7%; social classes 3-4: 18.7% and social classes 5-6: 16.0%).
- Children who consume fruit are more likely to live with both parents (77.5% vs. 74.2%) and to like school (78.7% vs. 69.1%) than those who do not.
- Children who consume fruit are more likely to find it easy to talk to their mother (83.8% vs. 81.3%), father (70.8% vs. 65.5%) and best friend (90.9% vs. 87.6%) than those who do not.
- Children who consume fruit are less likely to spend four or more evenings with friends (36.0% vs. 39.3%) and to feel pressured by schoolwork (35.6% vs. 39.4%) than those who do not.



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...Fruit consumption among schoolchildren in Ireland



Percentage of 15 year old children reporting consuming fruit everyday more than once, by country

International

Fifteen year old schoolchildren in Ireland (boys and girls together) are ranked 14th among 40 countries in Europe and North America, with 17.2% reporting fruit consumption twice or more daily. Overall 23.7% of 11 year olds in Ireland (rank 18th) and 18.4% of 13 year olds in Ireland (rank 20th) report consuming fruit twice or more daily.

Implications

The number of young people that report consuming fruit twice or more daily has remained stable since 2006. Ireland ranks high among 15 year olds and midrange for 11 and 13 year olds in comparison to other European and North American countries. Nevertheless the majority of schoolchildren in Ireland are not eating the recommended daily quantity of fruit. It is important to identify factors which

influence fruit consumption during childhood and adolescence and target interventions for increasing fruit consumption at school and at home.

References

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

Contact us at: hbsc@nuigalway.ie

This factsheet was prepared by Mary Callaghan, Natasha Clarke, Aoife Gavin, Colette Kelly, Michal Molcho, Saoirse Nic Gabhainn and Larri Walker.