

HBSC IRELAND

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.hbsc.org>
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HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN
SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN



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Summary

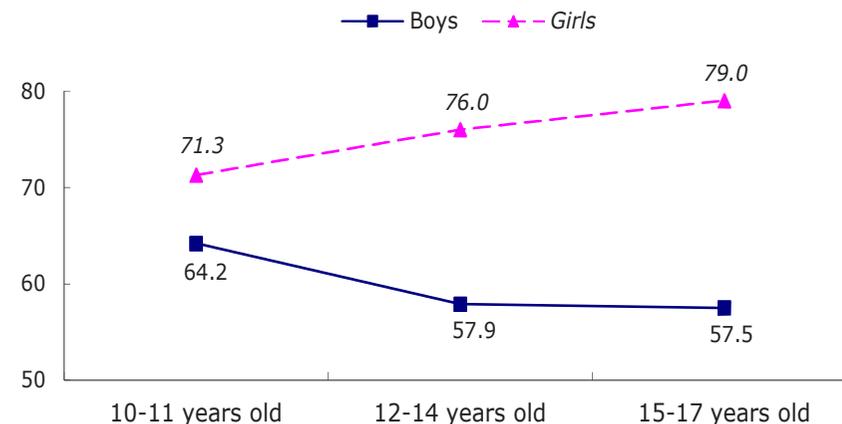
HBSC Ireland 2010 has found that 67.2% of schoolchildren in Ireland report brushing their teeth more than once a day (58.5% of boys and 76.5% of girls) representing an increase since 2006 (62.5%). Overall, tooth brushing more than once a day is higher among girls across every age group when compared to boys. It is higher among younger boys (64.2% of 10–11 year olds vs. 57.5% of 15-17 year old boys) and older girls (79.0% of 15-17 year old girls vs. 71.3% of 10-11 year old girls). Children who report brushing their teeth more than once a day are more likely to live with both parents, find it easy to talk to both parents and their best friend and report liking school.

Why this topic?

The promotion of oral hygiene and the prevention of oral diseases is important for overall health, a sense of well-being and appearance¹. The Dental Health Foundation in Ireland recommends tooth brushing twice daily which removes plaque and prevents dental decay². Poor oral hygiene has been linked to a variety of chronic diseases (e.g., cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer)². Adolescents who brush their teeth more than once a day by the time they are 12 years old are more likely to continue to do so throughout their teenage years³. Therefore good oral hygiene is of vital importance to the general health and well-being of children and adolescents¹.

Change 2006-2010

The overall percentage of children who report brushing their teeth more than once a day has increased since 2006 (62.5% to 67.2%). This increase is evident across both boys (53.5% to 58.5%) and girls (71.9% to 76.5%).

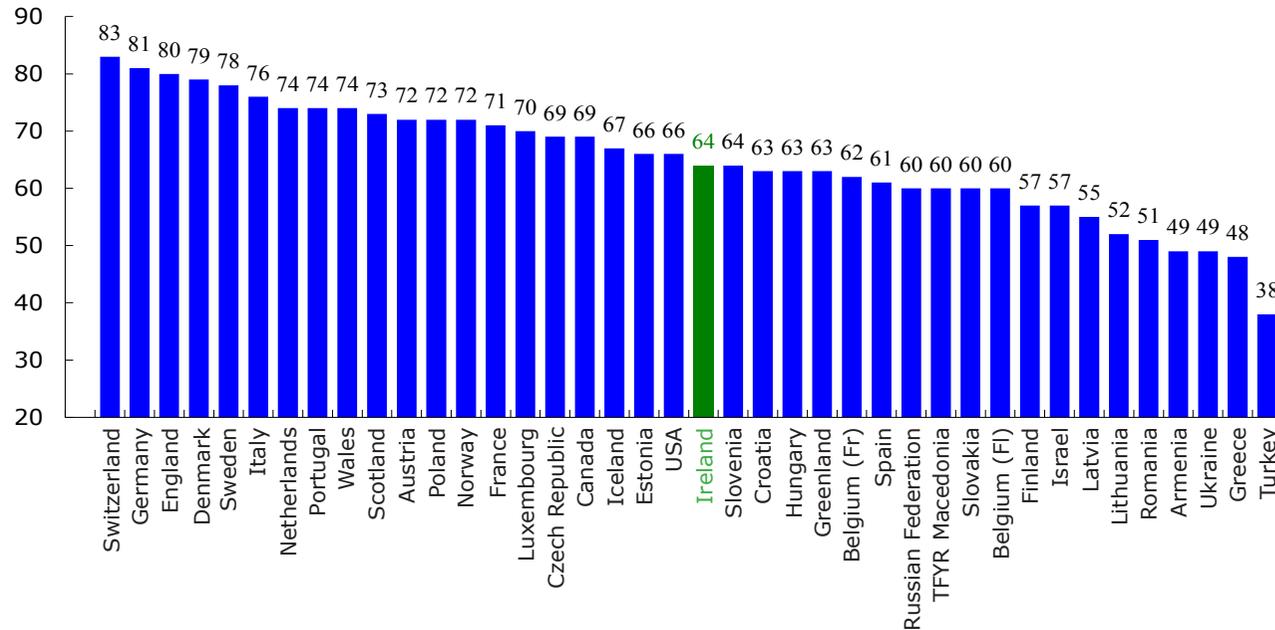


Percentage of children who brush their teeth more than once a day, by age and gender

Tooth brushing in context

- Children from higher social classes (SC) are more likely to report brushing their teeth more than once a day (SC 1-2: 68.9%; SC 3-4: 68.5% and SC 5-6: 64.1%).
- Children who brush their teeth more than once a day are more likely to live with both parents (76.1% vs. 72.0%) than those who do not.
- Children who brush their teeth more than once a day are more likely to find it easy to talk to their mother (83.6% vs. 77.8%), father (67.9% vs. 63.5%) and best friend (90.0% vs. 84.8%) than those who do not.
- Children who brush their teeth more than once a day are more likely to report liking school (73.5% vs. 65.4%) and less likely to report feeling pressured by school work (37.4% vs. 41.6%) than those who do not.

...Oral hygiene among schoolchildren in Ireland



Percentage of 15 year old children reporting that they brush their teeth more than once a day, by country

International

Fifteen year old schoolchildren (boys and girls together) in Ireland are ranked 21st among 40 countries in Europe and North America with 63.7% reporting that they brush their teeth more than once a day. Overall, 65.5% of 11 year olds (ranked 19th) and 65.2% of 13 year olds (ranked 18th) report that they brush their teeth more than once a day.

Implications

Among schoolchildren in Ireland, the percentage that report brushing their teeth more than once daily has increased since 2006. Ireland ranks midrange in comparison with Europe and North American countries for all ages brushing their teeth once a day or more. Living with both parents, ease of communicating with both parents and best friend

and liking school are positively associated with tooth brushing more than once a day. While over two-thirds of Irish schoolchildren are meeting the recommendations for good oral hygiene further work is needed in promoting the importance of oral hygiene. It is important that the recommended rates of tooth brushing continue to rise in Ireland, with a particular focus on maintaining the tooth brushing habits that develop in younger boys and increasing rates in younger girls so they will maintain this as they get older.

References

1. Currie, C., Zanotti, C., Morgan, A., Currie, D., de Looze, M., Roberts, C., Samdal, O., Smith, R., & Barnekow, V. (eds). (2012). *Social determinants of health and well-being among young people. Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study: international report from the 2009/2010 survey*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2012 (Health Policy for Children and Adolescents, No. 6).
2. <http://www.dentalhealth.ie/dentalhealth/teeth/effectivetoothb.html> (accessed 11 May 2012).
3. Levin, K.A. & Currie, C. (2010). Adolescent tooth brushing and the home environment: sociodemographic factors, family relationships and mealtime routines and disorganisation. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, 38(1):10–18.

HBSC Ireland is funded by the Health Promotion Policy Unit of the Department of Health.

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>

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