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Summary

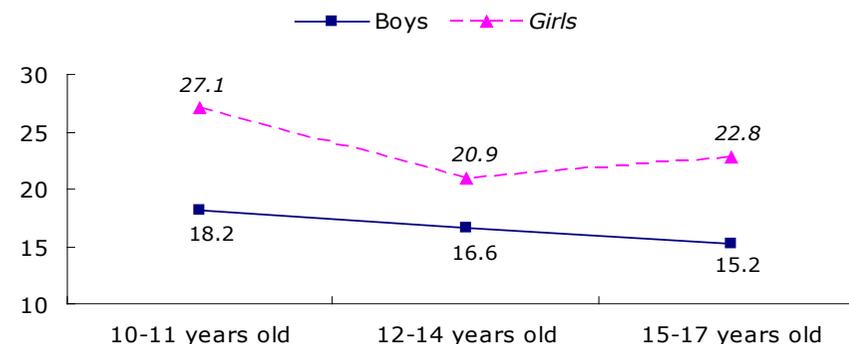
HBSC Ireland has found that 19.4% of schoolchildren in Ireland report consuming fruit twice or more daily (16.3% of boys and 22.6% of girls). This figure has remained relatively stable since 2002 (18%). The percentage of children who consume fruit twice or more daily is lower among older children; 18.2% of boys and 27.1% of girls aged 10-11 years, 15.2% of boys and 22.8% of girls aged 15-17 years. Children who consume fruit twice or more daily are less likely to spend four or more evenings with friends. They are more likely to: find it easy to talk to their father or best friend, live with both parents, like school, report excellent health and feel happy about their lives. Fruit consumption in this factsheet refers to children who report consuming fruit everyday, more than once.

Why this topic?

Fruit is a key component of a healthy diet and together with vegetables is an important way to optimise nutrition, maximise good health and reduce disease risk². Society needs to provide the structure and means for children to develop healthy eating habits that promote good health into adulthood³. Schools are one setting through which fruit can be encouraged and provided⁴. However the low intake of fruit among Irish schoolchildren continues to be a significant public health challenge⁵.

Trends 2002-2006

The overall percentage of children who report consuming fruit twice or more daily has remained relatively stable between 2002 (18%) and 2006 (19.4%). Prevalence of reported fruit consumption is much higher among girls than boys (22.6% vs. 16.3%). A pronounced increase in fruit consumption from 2002 to 2006 is seen among girls aged 10-11 years from 20.7% to 27.1%.



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

Fruit consumption in context

- Children from middle social classes are least likely to report consuming fruit twice or more daily (social classes 3-4: 17.8%; social classes 5-6: 19.2% and social classes 1-2: 22.3%,).
- Children who consume fruit are more likely to find it easy to talk to their father (67.8% vs. 63.1%) and best friend (90.2% vs. 87.2%) than those who do not.
- Children who consume fruit are more likely to live with both parents (83.7% vs. 79.8%) and to like school (74.7% vs. 66.4%) than those who do not.
- Children who consume fruit are less likely to spend 4 or more evenings with friends (39.8% vs. 42.6%) than those who do not.
- Children who consume fruit are more likely to report excellent health (47.2% vs. 29.9%) and feeling happy about their lives (55.9% vs. 48.1%) than those who do not.

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 Edinburgh. In 2006 HBSC Ireland surveyed 10,334 schoolchildren in Ireland from randomly selected schools throughout the country.

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



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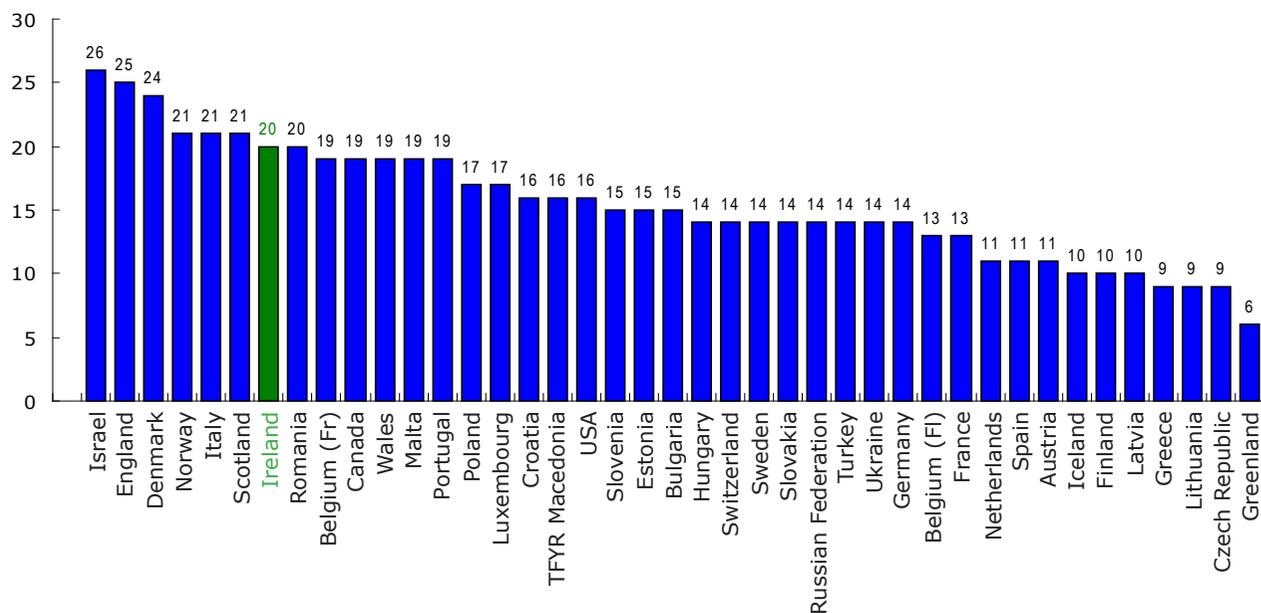


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AN ROINN SLÁNTE AGUS LEANAÍ

...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 7th among 41 countries in Europe and North America, with 20% reporting fruit consumption twice or more daily. Overall 23% of 11 year olds in Ireland (rank 16th) and 18% of 13 year olds in Ireland (rank 20th) report consuming fruit twice or more daily.

Implications

The percentage of young people that report consuming fruit twice or more daily has remained relatively stable since 2002. Ireland ranks high among 15 year olds and midrange for 11 and 13 year olds in comparison to other European and North American countries. It is important to note that while 15 year olds rank high internationally; this figure still indicates that the majority of schoolchildren in Ireland are

probably not meeting recommended daily intakes of fruit. Future attention needs to focus on why fruit consumption is low during adolescence, particularly in boys. Encouraging and supporting a whole school approach to food and nutrition is one approach through which fruit intake could be increased.

References

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

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