



New Report: Prediabetes Rates in American Teens Doubled in the Last 20 Years

By Megan Edwards
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Rates of prediabetes in American teenagers have more than doubled in the last two decades, according to a new study published in [JAMA Pediatrics](#).

The comprehensive study looked at data collected from more than 6,500 adolescents through the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey to identify trends in the rates of prediabetes—a condition marked by higher than normal blood sugar, which, if left unchecked, can lead to Type 2 diabetes and lead to other serious health issues such as heart disease or stroke.

In reviewing the data, the researchers found that in 1999, 11.6% of kids aged 12 to 19 were prediabetic. By 2018, that number had risen to 28.2%, a more than twofold increase.

The increase in prediabetes was consistent across almost all subpopulations regardless of income, ethnicity, or education. However, young boys and teens who were overweight were found to be at an even higher risk for developing the disease.

“If we do not intervene, the children who have prediabetes have a higher risk of developing diabetes and also have a higher risk of all cardiovascular diseases,” study author Junxiu Liu, PhD, an assistant professor at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York, told CNN.

The study authors noted that more in-depth research is needed to understand the cause of the skyrocketing cases. A [2018 report](#) published in *Current Diabetes Reports* suggests sugar-sweetened beverages such as soda and juice may play a significant role in the increased rates of adolescent prediabetes. A [2020 review](#) in *The Journal of Pediatrics* suggests that intervening with intensive lifestyle modifications that target nutrition and exercise can help mitigate the risk of the disease progressing in children.

A [number of recent studies](#) have linked healthy plant-based diets with lower rates of Type 2 diabetes, including a meta-analysis published in *Diabetologia* just this month.

More than 415 million people have diabetes worldwide, and the [World Health Organization](#) reports more than 95% of people with diabetes have Type 2, which is largely caused by lifestyle factors such as a poor diet, lack of exercise, and obesity.

To learn more about a whole-food, plant-based diet, visit our [Plant-Based Primer](#). For meal-planning support, check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK's easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path.