

# Cardiac and metabolic risk factors significantly more likely in severely obese teens

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Linlin Li, PhD, MPH, Duke University Medical Center (Durham, NC), Steven Kelder, PhD, MPH, The University of Texas School of Public Health (Austin), and coauthors assessed the dose-response relationship between weight status and cardio-metabolic [risk factors](#) among U.S. youths 6-19 years of age using data collected between 1999-2012. Based on a definition of severe obesity as a [body mass index](#) of at least 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, the researchers found that among severely obese adolescents, nearly 10% had high blood pressure, 40% had high triglycerides, 30% had high levels of low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, and about 27% had high fasting glucose. The results are reported in the article "[Cardiometabolic Risk Factors among Severely Obese Children and Adolescents in the United States, 1999-2012.](#)"

"These findings dramatize the heightened cardiovascular disease risks associated with severe obesity even among teenagers," says *Childhood Obesity* Editor-in-Chief Tom Baranowski, PhD, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX. "While causality cannot be inferred from these analyses, they do indicate that effective treatment programs are urgently needed for [severely obese](#) teens, and more effective prevention programs are needed at much earlier ages."

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Compared to normal weight adolescents, severely obese teens had at least a 2-fold greater risk of having high total cholesterol, triglycerides, and fasting glucose levels, and a greater than 5-times increased risk of elevated blood pressure. These cardio-metabolic risk factors varied with weight, with risk greater for severely obese children and teens compared to moderately obese and normal weight youngsters, as reported in a study published in *Childhood Obesity*, a peer-reviewed journal from Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers.

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