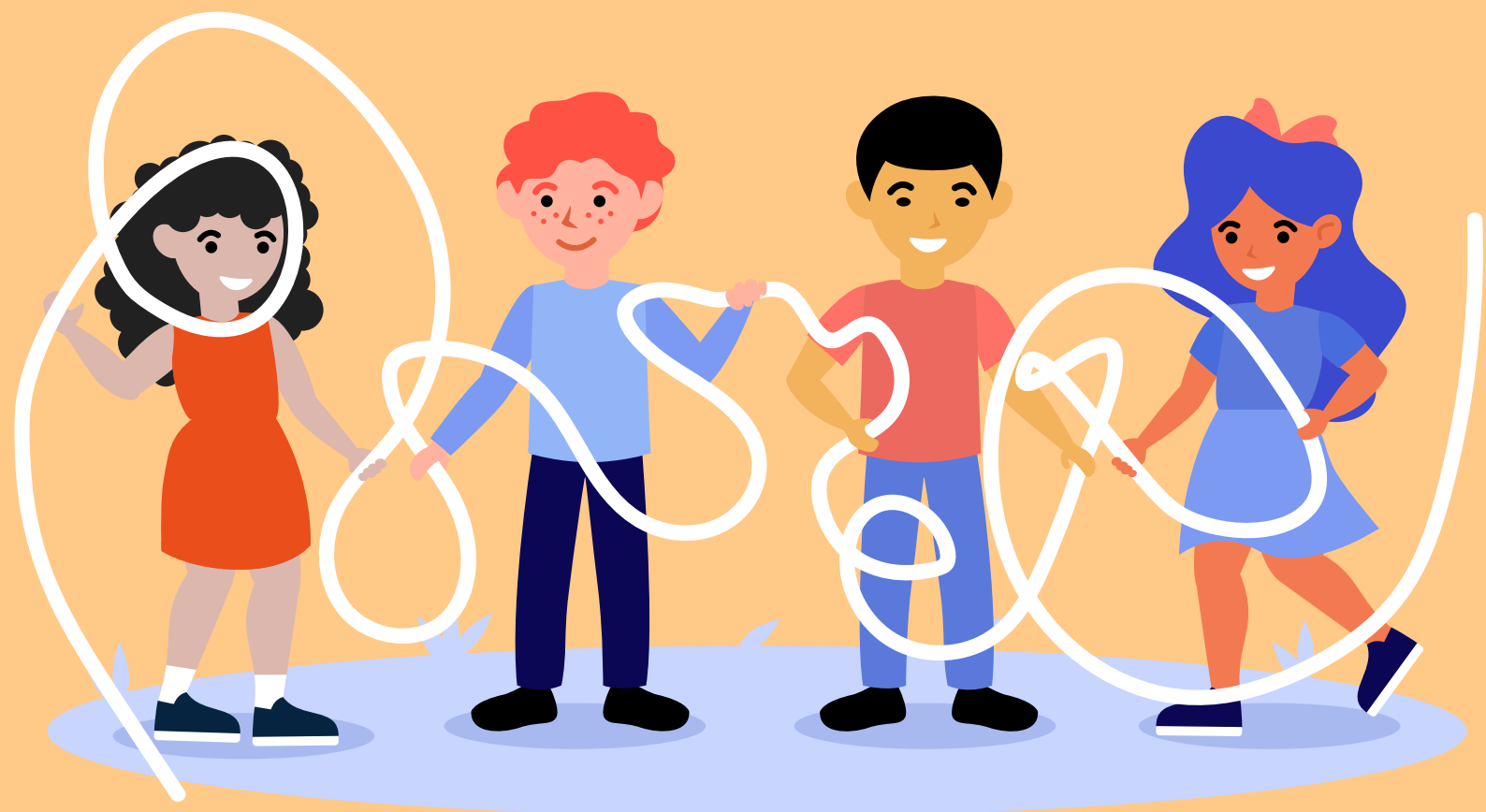
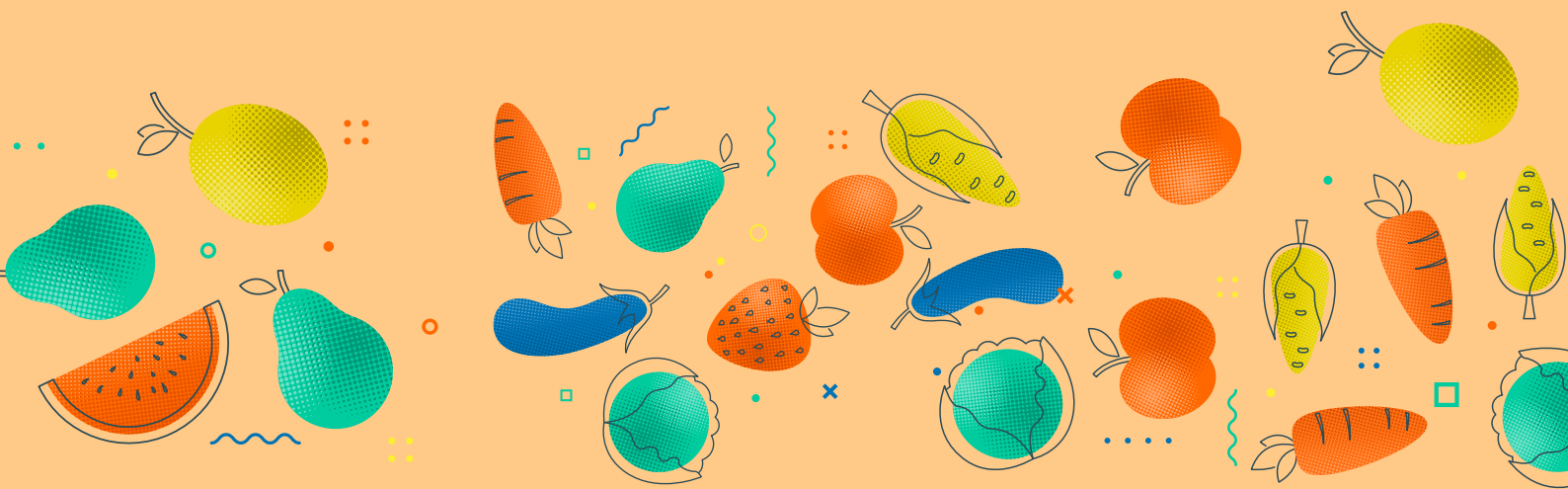


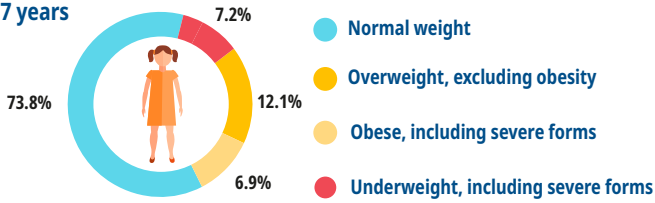
# COSI:

## Children's nutritional status - first-grade primary school children Republic of Moldova



## Weight status by age and sex

### Girls, 7 years



### Boys, 7 years



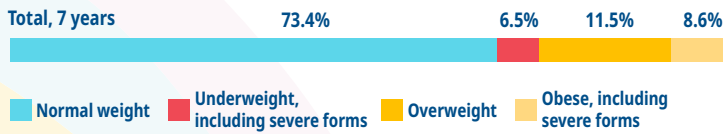
### Girls, all ages



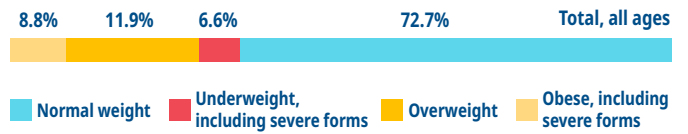
### Boys, all ages



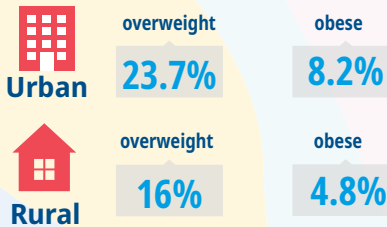
### Total, 7 years



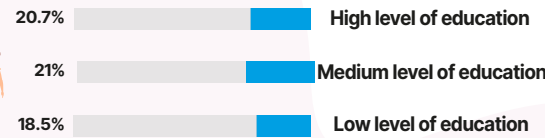
### Total, all ages



## Urban/Rural differences



### Overweight

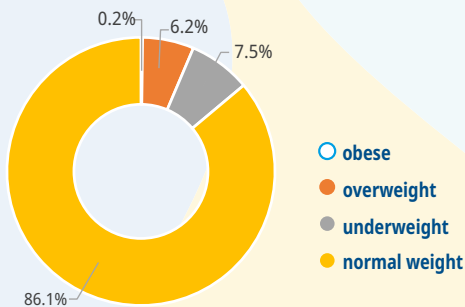


### Obesity among children



## Parental perception

### Parental perception of children's weight status:



### Overweight children:

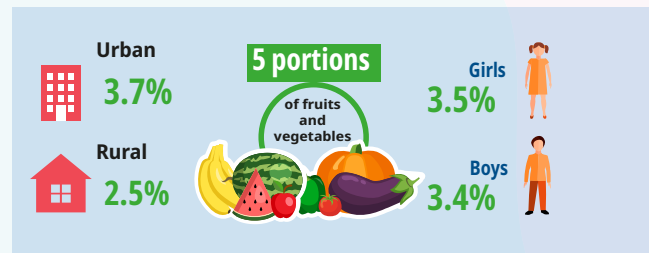
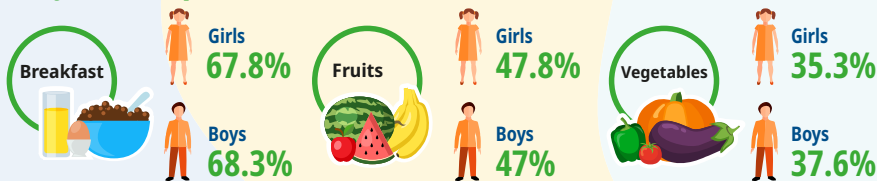


### Obese children:

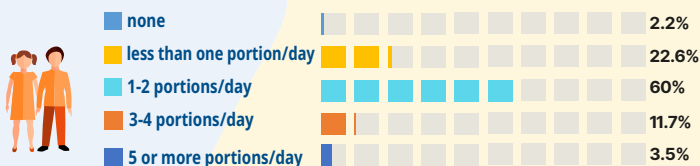


## Healthy Eating Habits

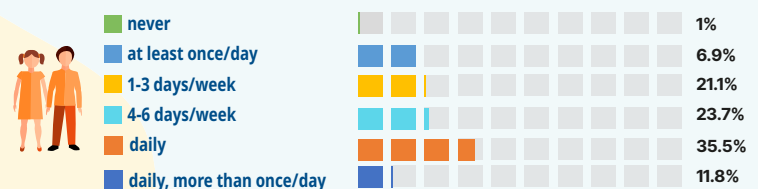
### Daily consumption:



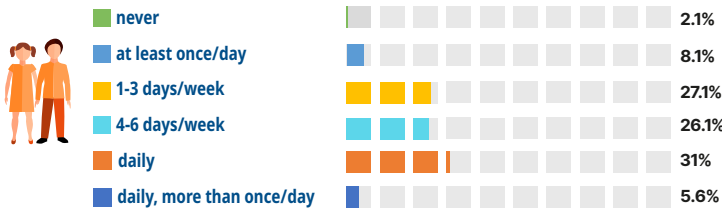
### Portions of fruits and vegetables



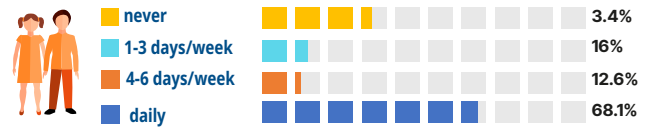
### Fruits consumption



## Vegetables consumption

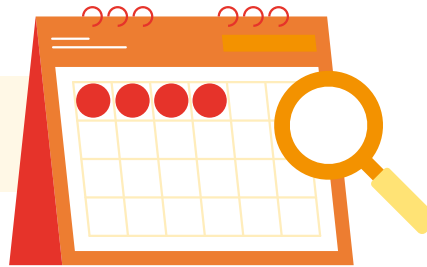


## Breakfast consumption



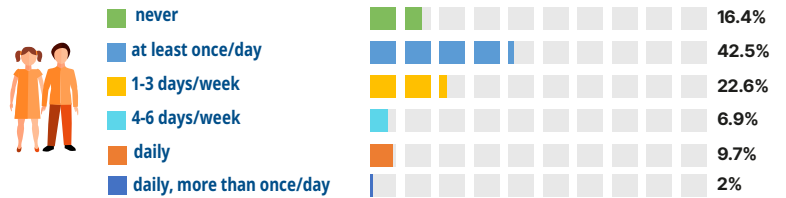
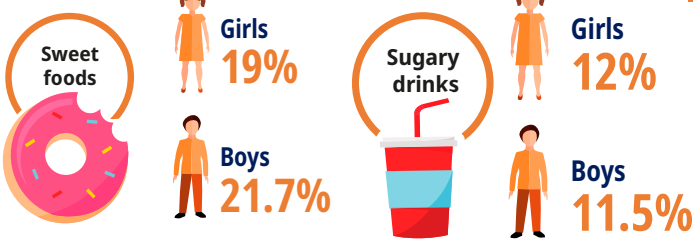
## Unhealthy eating habits

**4 > days** per week:

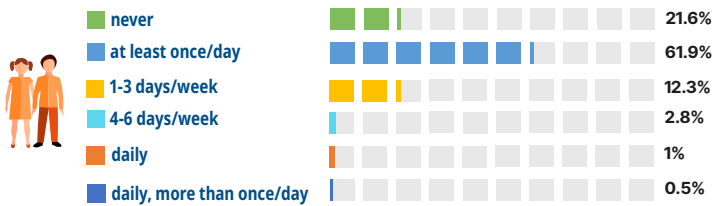


**Girls 3.2%**  
**Boys 3.2%**

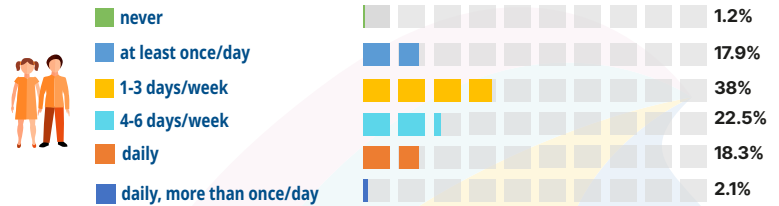
### Sugary drinks



### Salty snacks



### Sweet foods



## Physical Activity



**9 in 10 children** are active at least for one hour daily



Physical activity at moderate and high intensity:

**2 hours** during the week

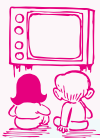
**3.6 hours** during the weekend



Walking or cycling to and from school

**53.6%**

## Screen Time



Watching TV or using electronic devices for more than 2 hours/day:

**43.6%** Weekdays

**81.2%** Weekend



Sleeping at least 9 hours per night

**86.1%**

## Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Children's Habits



**Diet**

+11.4% fruit consumption  
+9.4% vegetable consumption  
-16% salty snacks  
-9.1% sweets  
-15.5% sugary drinks



**Activitate fizică**

+18% time spent on moderate or high intensity physical activities during weekdays  
+17.3% time spent on moderate or high intensity physical activities during weekends



**Screen time**

+18% during weekdays  
+17% during weekends



**Sleep**

+13.3% during weekdays  
+10.5% during weekends

## HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, results from the COSI study indicated that one in five first-grade pupils in Moldova (20.7%) were affected by overweight, including 8.8% with obesity and 6.6% were underweight. Among children aged 7 years, the prevalence of overweight and obesity was similarly high, reaching 20.1%, of which was 8.6% represented obesity, while a further 6.5% were classified as thin. Boys were slightly less likely than girls to fall within the “healthy weight” range.

Dietary habits among primary school-aged children highlighted important challenges. Approximately two-thirds (68.1%) of children consumed breakfast daily. Less than half consumed fresh fruit daily (47.3%), while daily vegetable intake was even lower (36.6%). Only 3.5% achieved the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendations of five portions per day. By contrast, 20.4% of children consumed sweet snacks every day and one in ten children (11.7%) consume sugary drinks daily. Savory snack consumption was less frequent, and fewer than 1% of children reported eating them daily.

The data on physical activity indicate that the majority of children engaged in at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day, in line with the WHO’s recommendations for the 5–17 age group. Approximately 9 out of 10 children (90%) are physically active for at least one hour per day, regardless of sex, family type, or parental education level. On average, parents reported that children engaged in active or vigorous play for about 2.4 hours per day, and 43.4% participated in at least two hours of organized sports per week. Active transport to school was relatively common: more than half of children (53.6%) walked to and from school. When asked about safety, parents rated the route to school as moderately safe, assigning a score of 5 out of 10.

Screen time and physical activity patterns also revealed mixed results. During weekdays, 43.6% of children reported spending two or more hours per day watching TV or using electronic devices; however, this proportion increased to 81.2% on weekends, when screen exposure increased substantially. The majority of children (86.1%) sleep on average at least 9 hours per night.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

**Governments** have a key role in creating healthy food and physical activity environments. This requires a comprehensive approach, including the promotion of healthy diets and physical activity among children of all ages, as well as preconception and pregnancy care and provision of weight management services, as part of universal health coverage.

Policy actions to combat the burden of malnutrition in all its forms may include:

- fiscal interventions (sugar-sweetened beverage taxation)
- encouraging reformulation of foods high in fat, sugar and salt
- implementing marketing restrictions on unhealthy products (especially for children)
- front-of-pack labelling schemes
- initiatives to create opportunities for physical activity and active travel (including urban planning)

Schools play a key role in addressing the double burden of malnutrition through the provision of healthy meals, education on healthy nutrition and physical activity (including provision of facilities for physical activity), and providing links to the broader community.

## ABOUT COSI

**The WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI)**, established in 2007, has been measuring trends in overweight and obesity among primary school-aged children for over 15 years. Based on a common protocol, it collects nationally representative data from children aged 6-9 years through standardized measurements of body weight and height and additional data on dietary intake, physical activity, sedentary behavior, family background, and school environments.

Participation in COSI has grown from 13 countries in 2007 to 47 countries in 2024, making it the largest childhood obesity surveillance initiative globally. The sixth round, conducted between 2022 and 2024, measured around 470,000 children in 37 countries within the WHO European Region. In Republic of Moldova, 90 primary schools were included in the study, and approximately 3,600 children enrolled in first grade were measured. Additionally, more than 3,170 families participated by filling out a questionnaire about their children’s eating habits, physical activity patterns, and sedentary behaviors. Data from COSI play a key role in defining the obesity problem, informing action, making international comparisons, and tracking progress over time.

The Division of Prevention and Health Promotion of the WHO European Region and the WHO country office in Moldova are committed to supporting comprehensive, integrated, multi sectoral action to halt the rise of childhood obesity in the WHO European Region.

## National Objective 2030

As set in the National NCD Program: **Zero increase in the obesity rate by 2030.**