



# South Africa



## Country report card - under-5s

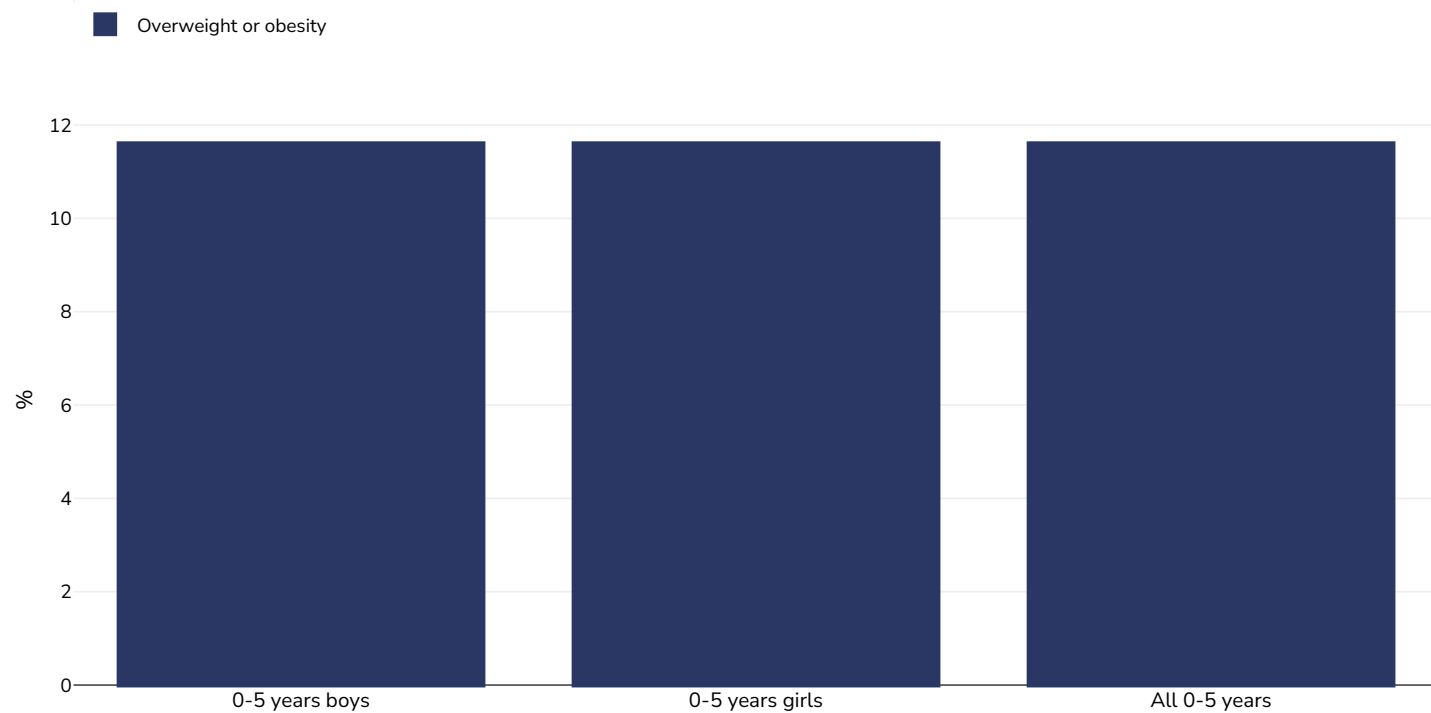
*This report card contains the latest data available on the Global Obesity Observatory on overweight and obesity for children under 5. Where available, data on common and relevant obesity drivers and comorbidities are also presented.*

*View the latest version of this report on the Global Obesity Observatory at <https://data.worldobesity.org/country/south-africa-197/>.*

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## Obesity prevalence

### 0-5 years, 2017



Age: 0-5

Sample size: 4638254

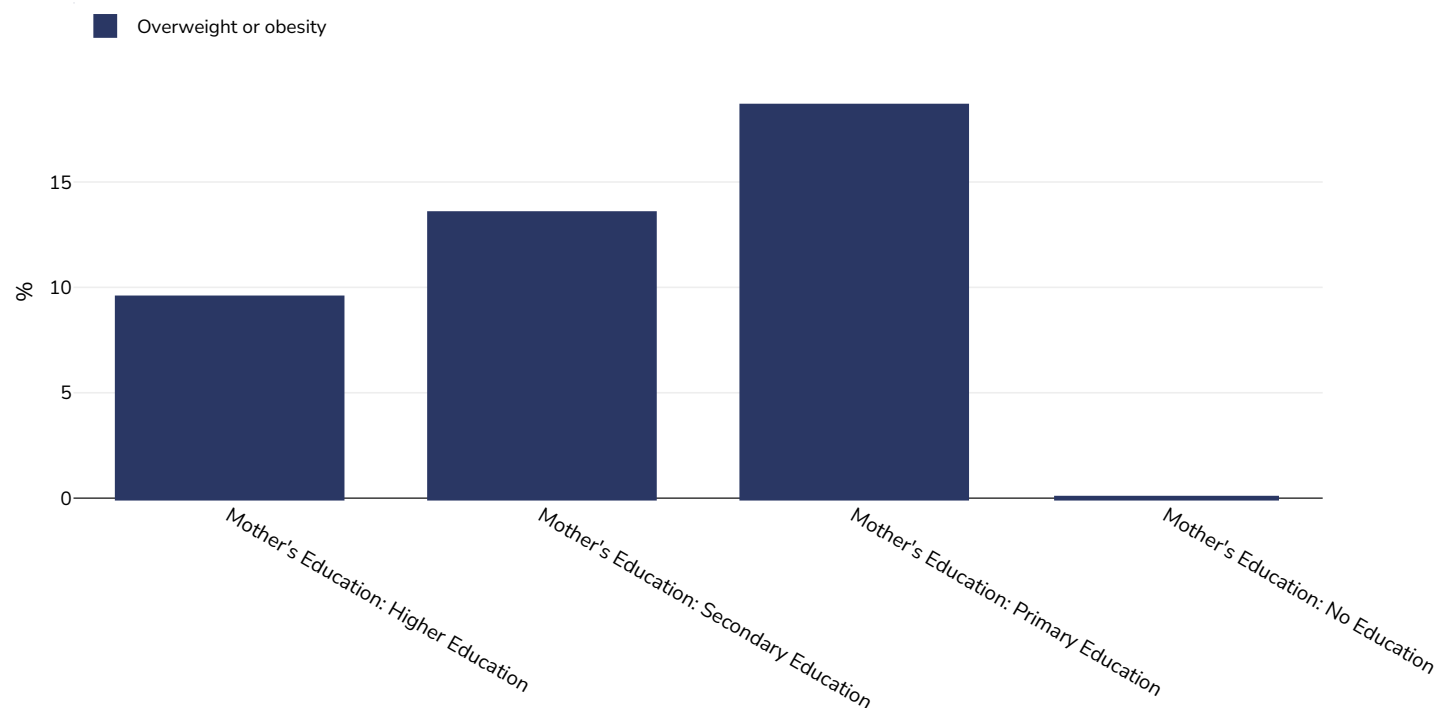
References: Other: South Africa National Income Dynamics Study 2017, Wave 5

Notes: UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates Expanded Database: Overweight (Survey Estimates), May 2023, New York.  
For more information about the methodology, please consult <https://data.unicef.org/resources/jme-2023-country-consultations/>  
Percentage of children under 5 years of age falling above 2 standard deviations (moderate and severe) from the median weight-for-height of the reference population.

Definitions: =>+2SD

## Overweight/obesity by education

0-5 years, 2016



**Sample size:** 1384

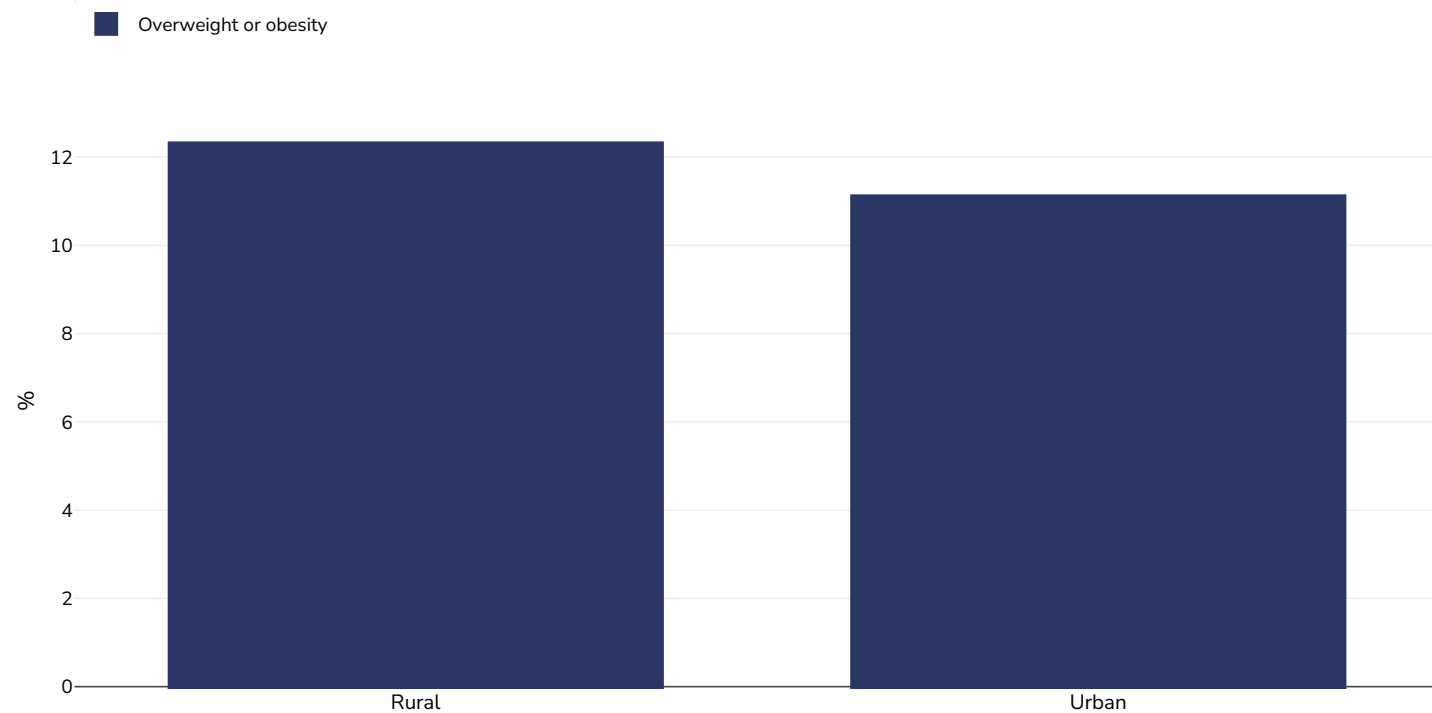
**References:** DHS: South Africa Demographic and Health Survey 2016. Pretoria, South Africa, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NDoH, Stats SA, SAMRC, and ICF

**Notes:** UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates Expanded Database: Overweight (Survey Estimates), May 2023, New York. For more information about the methodology, please consult <https://data.unicef.org/resources/jme-2023-country-consultations/> Percentage of children under 5 years of age falling above 2 standard deviations (moderate and severe) from the median weight-for-height of the reference population.

**Definitions:** =>+2SD

## Overweight/obesity by region

0-5 years, 2017



Sample size: 4638254

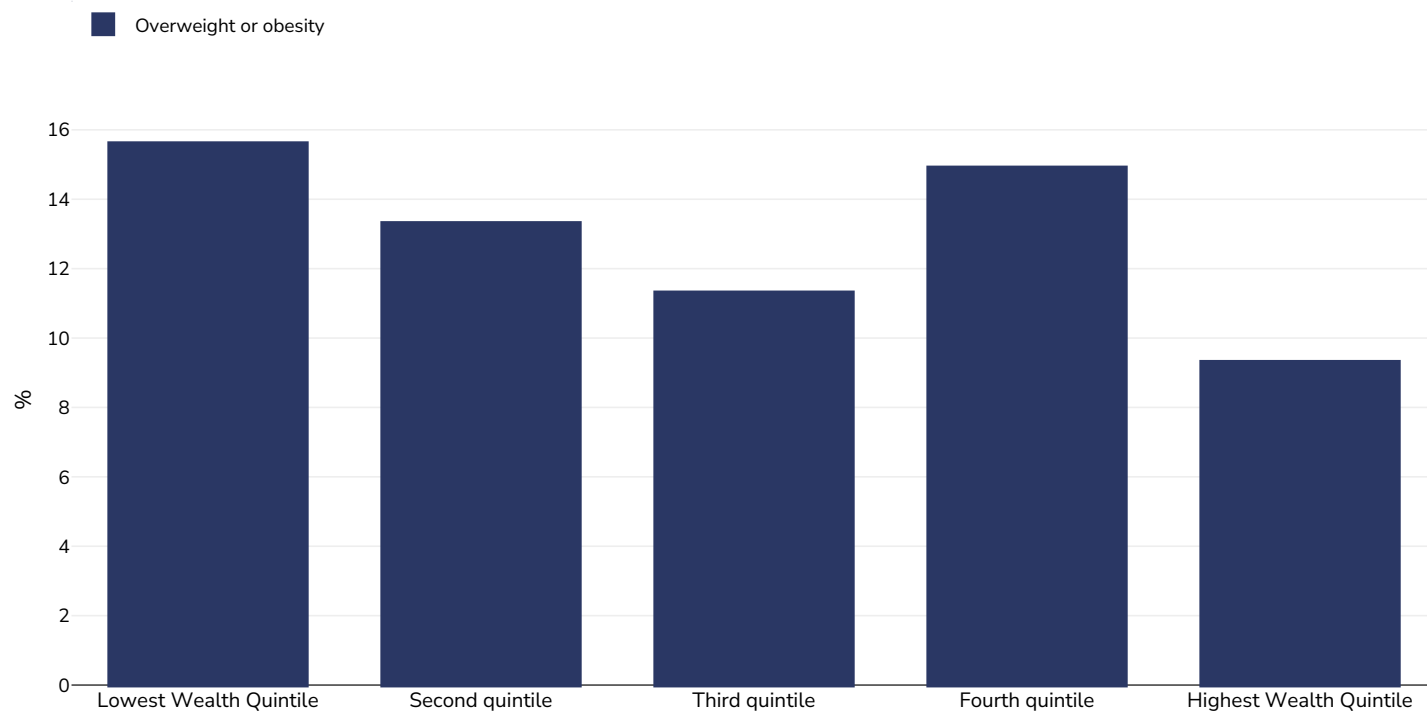
References: Other: South Africa National Income Dynamics Study 2017, Wave 5

Notes: UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates Expanded Database: Overweight (Survey Estimates), May 2023, New York.  
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Percentage of children under 5 years of age falling above 2 standard deviations (moderate and severe) from the median weight-for-height of the reference population.

Definitions: =>+2SD

## Overweight/obesity by socio-economic group

0-5 years, 2016



**Sample size:** 1384

**References:** DHS: South Africa Demographic and Health Survey 2016. Pretoria, South Africa, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NDoH, Stats SA, SAMRC, and ICF

**Notes:** UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates Expanded Database: Overweight (Survey Estimates), May 2023, New York. For more information about the methodology, please consult <https://data.unicef.org/resources/jme-2023-country-consultations/> Percentage of children under 5 years of age falling above 2 standard deviations (moderate and severe) from the median weight-for-height of the reference population.

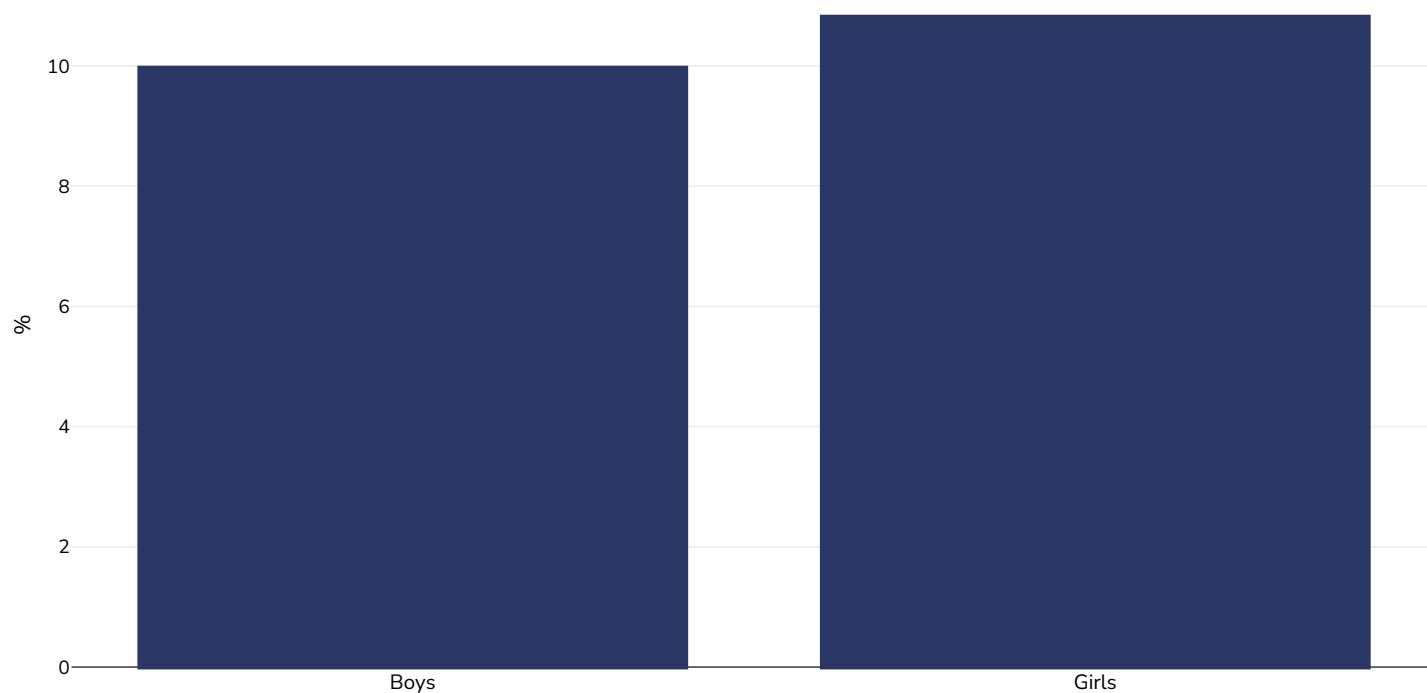
**Definitions:** =>+2SD

## Overweight/obesity by ethnicity

*Ethnic groups are as defined by publication of origin and are not as defined by WOF. In some instances ethnicity is conflated with nationality and/or race.*

## Double burden of underweight & overweight

0-5 years, 2017-2017



Survey type: Measured

Age: 0-5

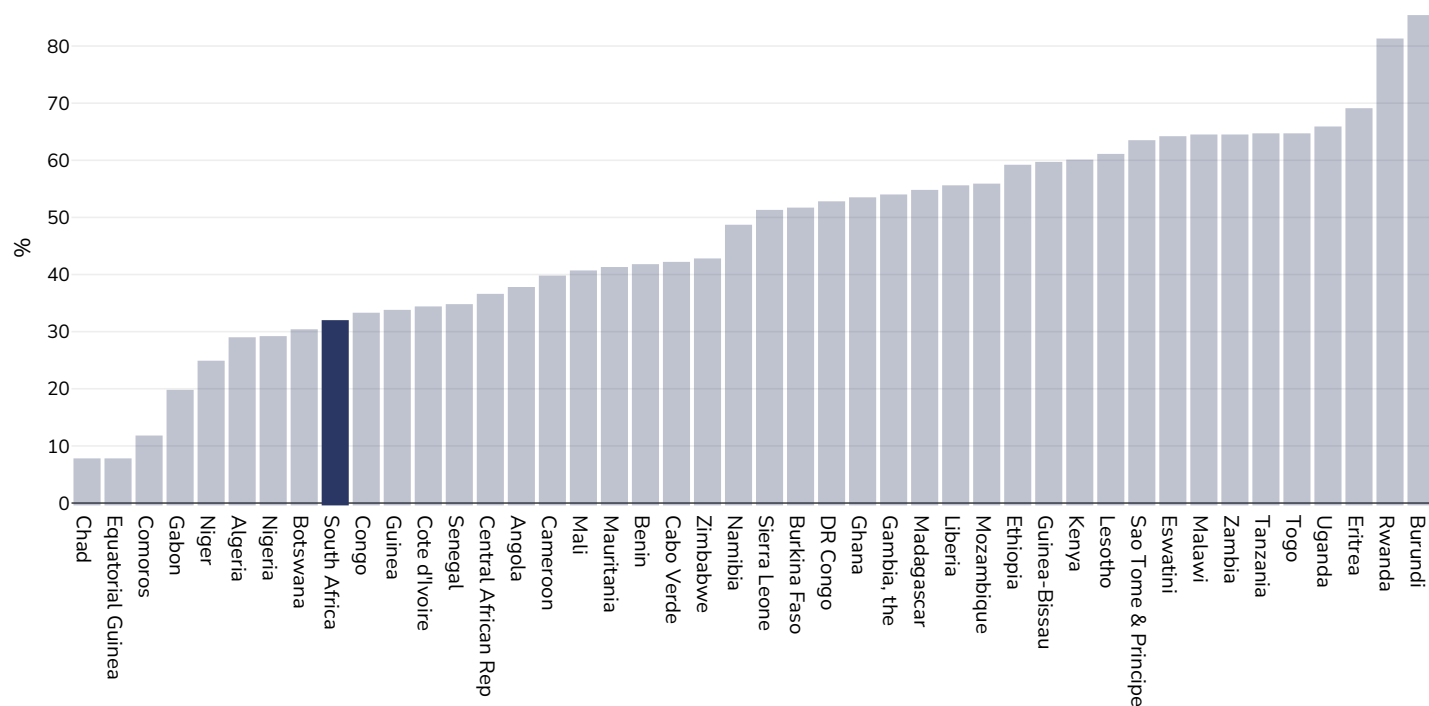
References: UNICEF data available at <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/> (last accessed 12.03.25)

Notes: Children under 5 falling below -2 standard deviations from the median height for age and falling at or above +2 standard deviations from the median weight-for-height of the reference population



## % Infants exclusively breastfed 0-5 months

0-5 years, 2010-2024



**References:** South Africa Demographic and Health Survey 2016. Pretoria, South Africa, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NDoH, Stats SA, SAMRC, and ICF

**Notes:** Full details are available. Original citation United Nations Children's Fund, Division of Data, Analysis, Planning and Monitoring (2023). Global UNICEF Global Databases: Infant and Young Child Feeding: Exclusive breastfeeding, New York, October 2023.

PDF created on July 3, 2025