



South Africa



Country report card - under-5s

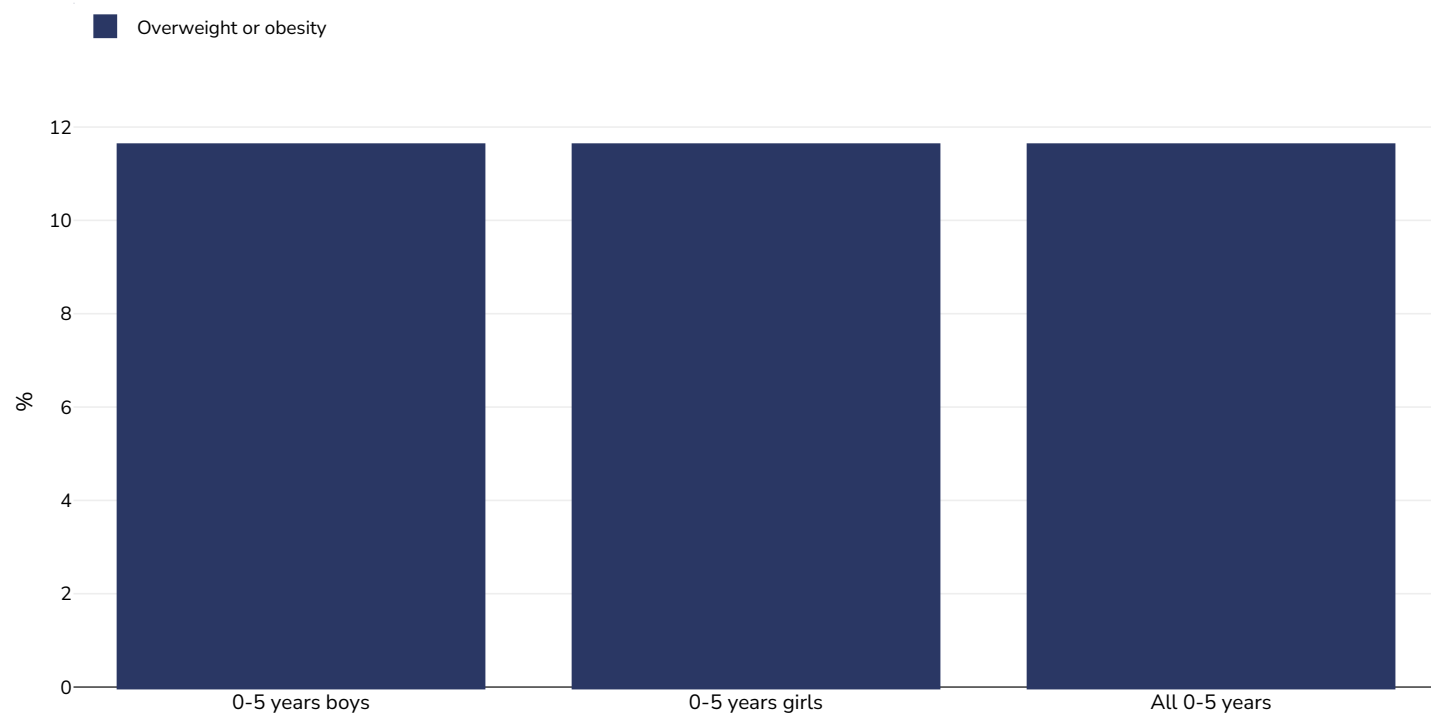
This report card contains the latest data available on the Global Obesity Observatory on overweight and obesity for children under 5. Where available, data on common and relevant obesity drivers and comorbidities are also presented.

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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% Infants exclusively breastfed 0-5 months	□

Obesity prevalence

0-5 years, 2017



Age: 0-5

Sample size: 4638254

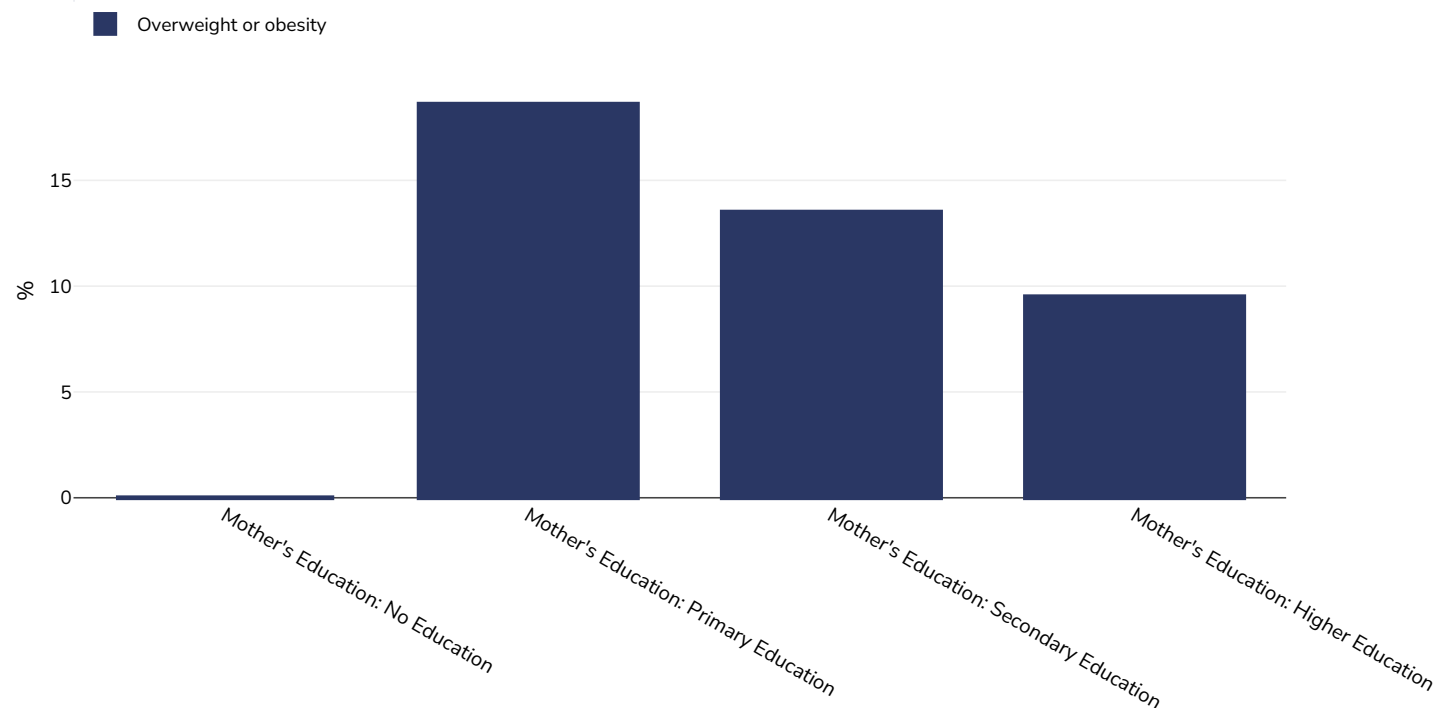
References: Other: South Africa National Income Dynamics Study 2017, Wave 5

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

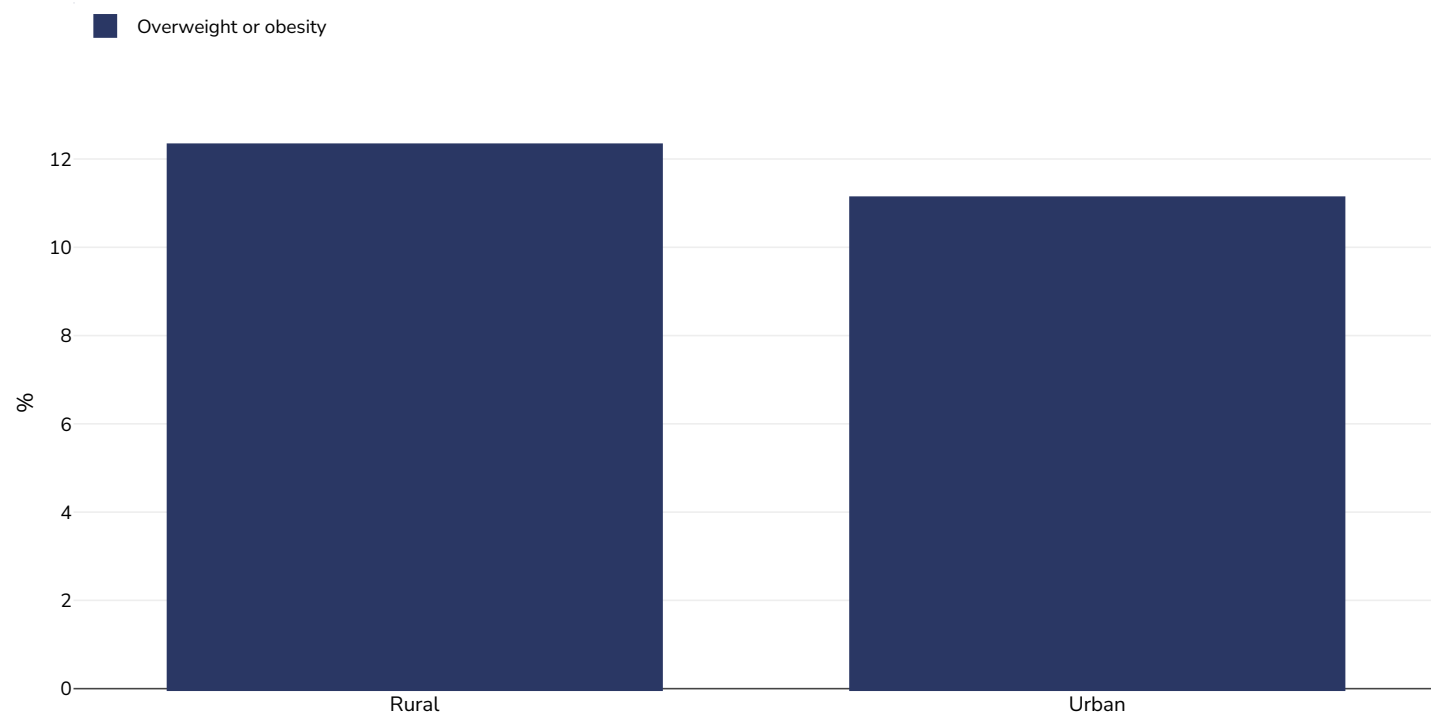
References: DHS: South Africa Demographic and Health Survey 2016. Pretoria, South Africa, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NDoH, Stats SA, SAMRC, and ICF

Notes: UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates Expanded Database: Overweight (Survey Estimates), May 2023, New York.
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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 region

0-5 years, 2017



Sample size: 4638254

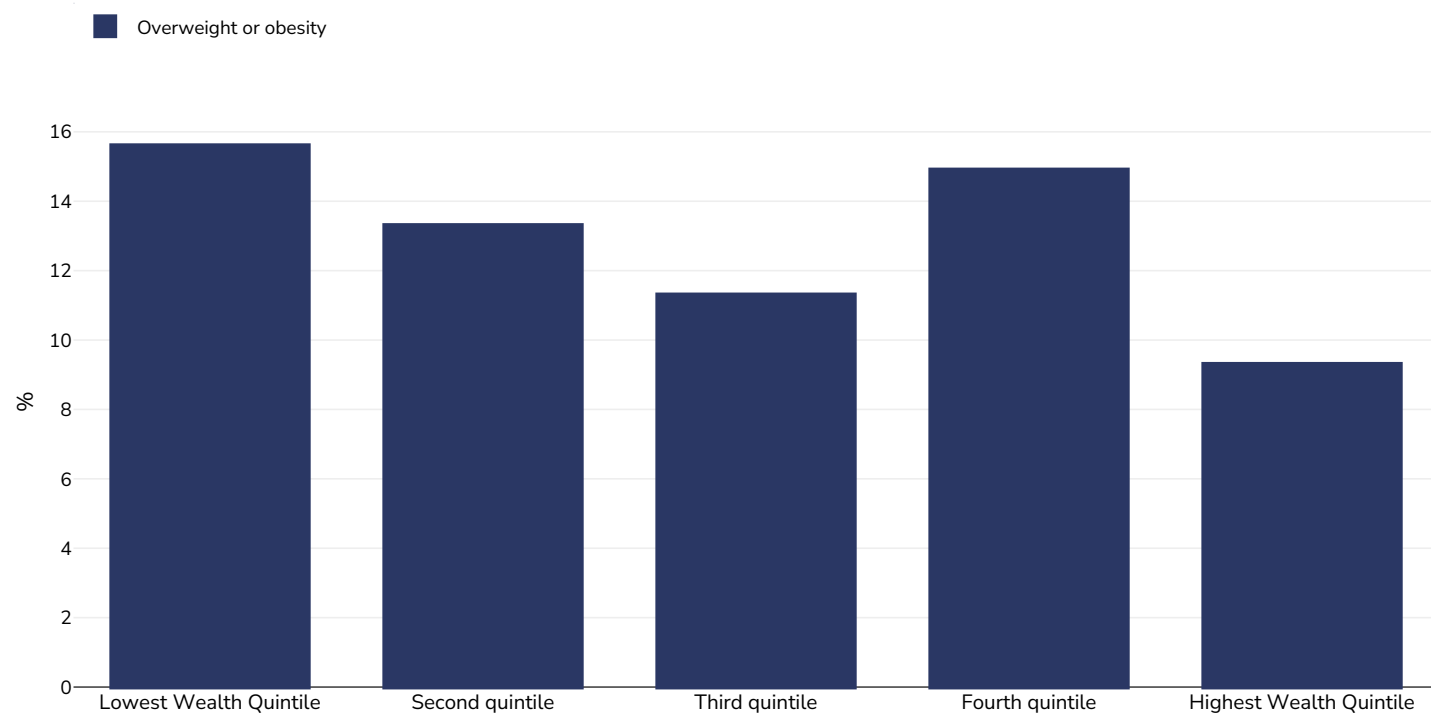
References: Other: South Africa National Income Dynamics Study 2017, Wave 5

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.

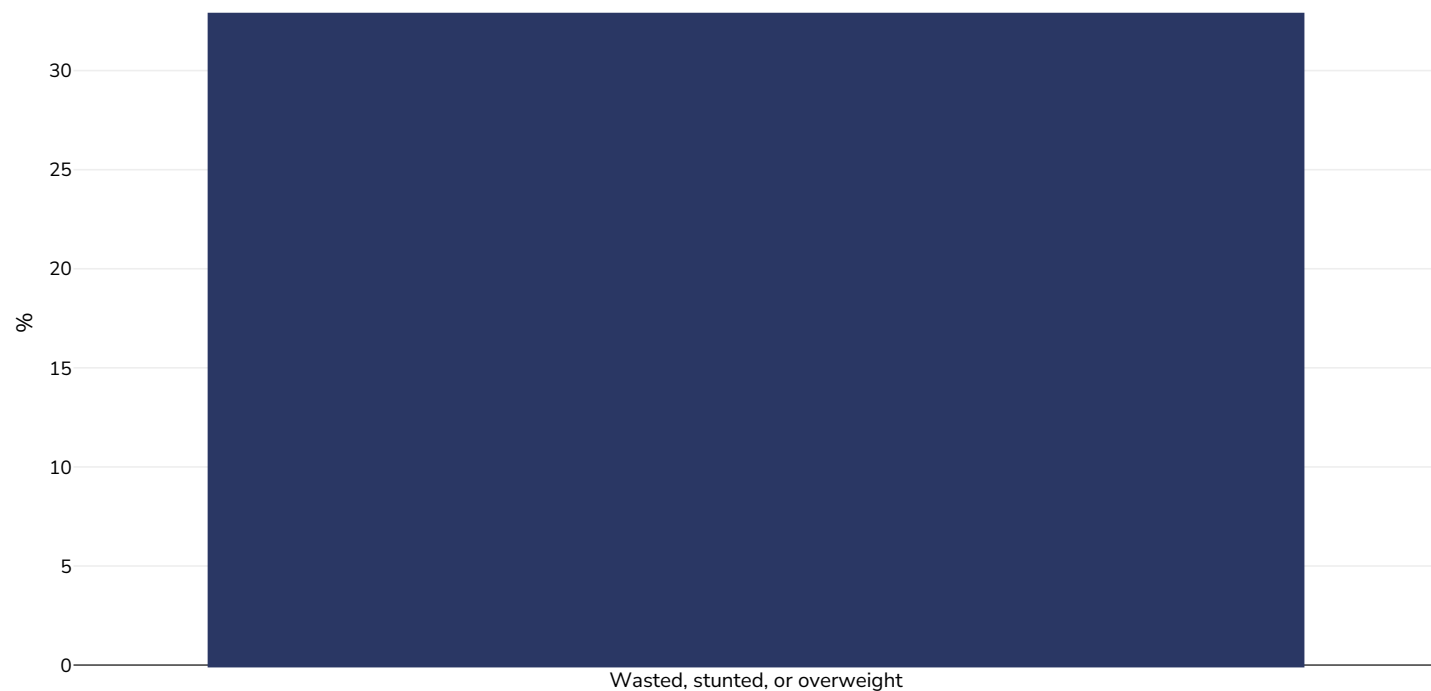
Definitions: =>+2SD

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

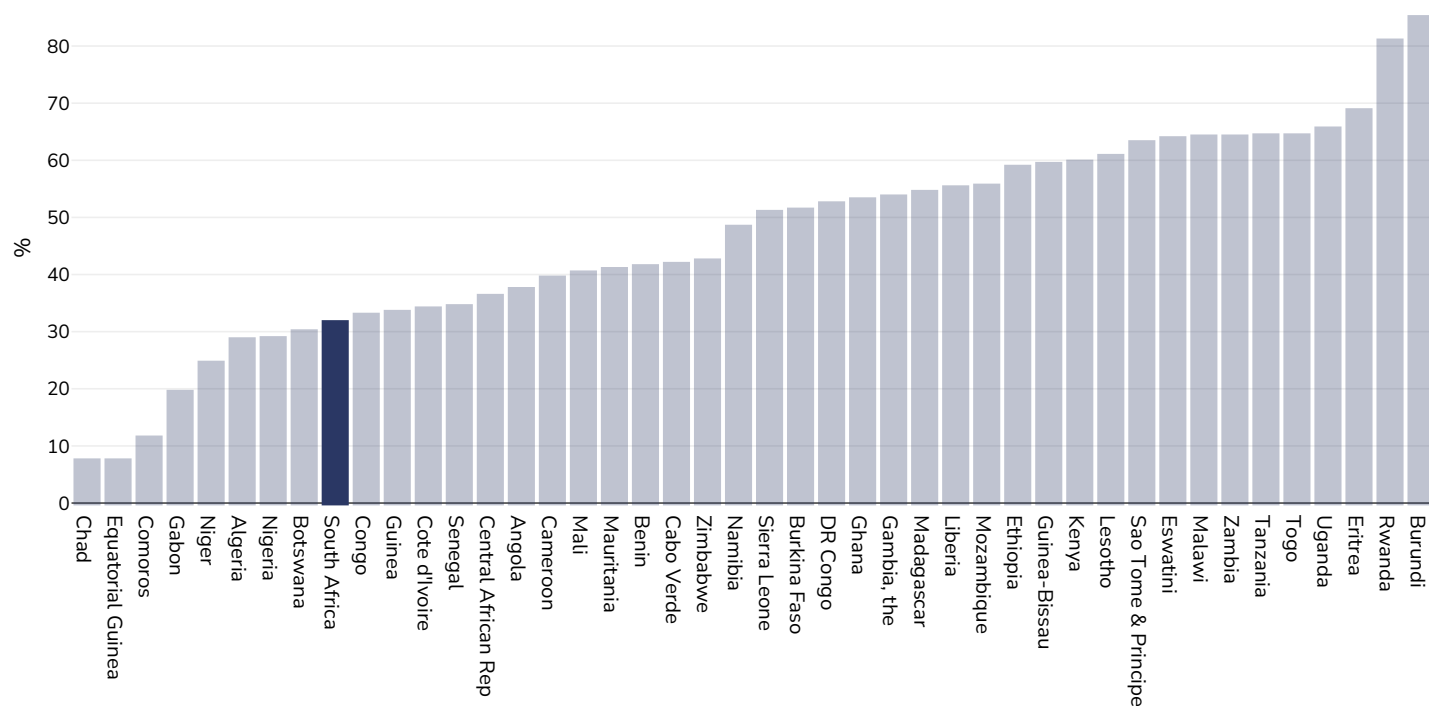
0-5 years, 2017



Survey type:	Measured
Age:	0-5
References:	United Nations Children's Fund, Division of Data, Analysis, Planning and Monitoring (2025). Global UNICEF Global Databases: Overlapping Stunting, Wasting and Overweight (Survey Estimates), 2025, New York. For more information, visit: https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/ [Accessed 06.08.25]
Notes:	South Africa National Income Dynamics Study 2017, Wave 5
Definitions:	Combined percentage of children under 5 years of age who are either wasted, stunted, or overweight (falling below -2 standard deviations from the median weight-for-height, falling below -2 standard deviations from the median height for age, or falling at or above +2 standard deviations from the median weight-for-height of the reference population)
Cutoffs:	WHZ <-2, HAZ <-2 and WHZ >+2

% 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.

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