



Digital health technology interventions for the management of obesity in children and adolescents

Evidence in numbers




This review located **15 studies**, and included **911** obese children and adolescents from **9 countries** in attempting to answer this question.

Important Findings


- Digital health tools like apps, wearable devices and text messages in combination or compared with usual care (visiting your doctor or dietician, no specific intervention, standard treatment for obesity) may reduce body fat slightly over a short period of time. On average, the body fat may be reduced by 2.63%.
- Digital tools used as support methods can increase engagement and enhance monitoring.
- Further trials are currently underway, looking at weight management interventions like text messaging, mobile apps, telehealth and digital support systems.
- It is recommended that parents keep an eye on their child's mental health and body image while looking out for any signs of unhealthy eating behaviors or disorders.


Palacios C, Hernandez J, Ajmal A, Rodriguez AJ, Hassan AY, Metzendorf M-I, Ramella-Roman JC.. Digital health, technology-driven or technology-assisted interventions for the management of obesity in children and adolescents. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2025, Issue 7. Art. No.: CD015968. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD015968. Accessed 27 October 2025.


Key messages

 Digital health tools can be used to help, track or coach being active or to eat healthier. Use these tools with your existing plan.

 **Fun physical & gaming activities:** These tools can make physical activity enjoyable and engaging (cycling apps, dance mats, games that include being physically active).

 **Empowerment:** Receive/send daily motivational texts to support your child's goals or to remind them of healthy eating times.

 **Self-monitoring:** wearable fitness trackers can monitor daily activity/progress (e.g. steps counts) and mobile apps to log food intake, body measurements, physical activity or feedback.

 **Telehealth for convenience:** Makes the management of obesity easier by connecting remotely with healthcare professionals (e.g. video calls, texts, phone calls and remote counseling).

About Cochrane South Africa

This Plain Language Summary was produced by Cochrane South Africa, at the South African Medical Research Council, which seeks to improve public health outcomes through producing, promoting, and translating high-quality evidence-based research.



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