

Hypertension in Youth

Using the updated 2017 American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Clinical Practice Guideline:

- 4% of youth aged 12–19 years have hypertension
- another 10% have elevated blood pressure (previously called “prehypertension”. The new guideline changes the numbers and uses a lower threshold for hypertension. Compared to the former guideline, the updated guideline reclassifies 2.6% of youth in the United States, or nearly 800,000 youth, as having hypertension.)
- An estimated 1.3 million youth age 12-19 would have hypertension according to the new guidelines, which is about 4% of the population. (In a classroom of 30 youth, one would have hypertension, and about 3 more would have elevated blood pressure.)

Nearly half of the youth newly reclassified as having hypertension have obesity. (Obesity in youth is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to the 95th percentile)

- Youth with obesity had the highest prevalence of hypertension.
- Youth aged 18–19 years account for about half of the increase, and males account for more than two thirds.

Risks for cardiovascular disease that start in childhood are more likely to carry over into adulthood. Youth who have cardiovascular disease risk factors, such as hypertension, obesity, and diabetes, are more likely to have these risk factors as adults, putting them at greater risk for heart disease and stroke.

<https://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/youth.htm>