

An Overview of Youth Health in Montreal

UNDERSTAND, MOBILIZE, TAKE ACTION



Body Image Satisfaction and Weight-Control Behaviours Among Montréal Youth: Trends to Watch

Highlights

Many young people are concerned about their appearance, and this is not without consequences. Body dissatisfaction is linked, notably, to many mental health issues and lifestyle habits.



Decreased satisfaction with body shape

- Body shape satisfaction has declined significantly from 2010–2011 to 2022–2023, with a 14% decrease among girls and 7% decrease among boys.
- In 2022–2023, less than half of young people were satisfied with their body shape, with similar rates among girls (37%) and boys (41%).



A majority of young people are taking steps to manage their weight

- Only 32% of boys and 33% of girls are taking no actions concerning their weight. Others are trying to gain, lose, or maintain their weight.
- 54% of boys have frequently used at least one method to build muscle mass over the past six months.
- Among students who are trying to control or lose weight, the proportion of students who (often or sometimes) use potentially dangerous methods has increased since 2016–2017.

An overview of the current situation and its evolution underscores the importance of adopting a public health approach to the issue of body image. Priority should be given to initiatives aimed at promoting the development of a positive body image among young people and in the environments they frequent. We must also address practices and discourse that perpetuate various forms of weight-based stigma throughout society, including in digital environments such as social media. Furthermore, social media should be viewed as a vehicle that can promote unrealistic body ideals and a diet culture that undermines young people's physical and mental health.

