

Understanding Your Child's Weight



Across the country, children are struggling to eat a balanced diet and get enough physical activity. The result is children — overweight, underweight, and healthy weight — who are malnourished. Children routinely do not consume adequate amounts of fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, fiber, and calcium. Children of all shapes and sizes are not making healthy choices and parents often struggle to understand how to make a difference. Fortunately, KidSmart is here to help through education and practical advice to help keep you and your family healthy.

How do know if my child's weight is healthy?

Weight status of children is often referred to by a child's body mass index or BMI. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Statistics, body mass index (BMI) is a practical measure used to determine whether or not a child's weight falls within a healthy range. BMI is a measure of weight in relation to height that, in children, places them in a percentage specific to their gender and age. BMI is the most widely accepted method used to screen for obesity in children and adolescents because it is relatively easy to obtain the height and weight measurements needed to calculate BMI; measurements are non-invasive and BMI correlates with body fatness. While BMI is an accepted screening tool for the initial assessment of body fatness in children and adolescents, it is not a diagnostic measure because BMI is not a direct measure of body fatness.

How do I know my child's BMI?

Great question! You can always get this information from your family's health care provider, but if you want to figure it out in the meantime, you can visit the CDC's child and teen BMI calculator on their website: www.cdc.gov. While you're at it, find out yours and share your family's results with your healthcare provider. For more information about BMI, visit the KidSmart Web site at www.KidSmartKid.org.



