

## Body Mass Index for Children 2 – 12 Years of Age

My BMI today is: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Body Mass Index (BMI)** measures weight in relation to height and age. BMI is used as a screening tool to assess a child's height and weight over time. This helps determine how their growth and development compare with others of the same sex and age. There's no one ideal number. Healthy children come in all shapes and sizes. Ideally, each child will follow the same growth pattern over time. Kids who learn to enjoy a variety of foods and get regular physical activity will develop a healthy lifestyle. Providing balanced meals, watching portion sizes and promoting daily physical activity will help your child be healthy. **Always consult with your child's doctor before making changes to their diet and physical activity.**

### **A BMI at the 5<sup>th</sup> and less than the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile is considered a “healthy weight.”**

**Take action:** Your child is at a healthy weight. Keep up the good work!

- Provide a balanced diet. Include whole grains, fat free/low-fat dairy, and at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day. (Keep the peeling on when possible. It provides fiber.)
- Provide your child with the chance to eat breakfast daily.
- Eat meals together as a family, most days of the week. Watch portion sizes.
- Model eating healthy meals and enjoying physical activity. Parents are very powerful role models.
- Encourage 60 minutes of daily physical activity.
- Limit screen time (TV or computer) to two hours or less daily.

### **A BMI at the 85<sup>th</sup> and below the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile is considered “at risk of overweight.”**

**Take action:** It's time to help your child make behavior and lifestyle changes. Help your child achieve and maintain a healthy weight. And avoid health problems in the future.

- Practice action points for “healthy weight” (see above).
- Limit meals outside of the home.
- Avoid sugar sweetened beverages i.e. pop, lemonade, juice (limit 100% fruit juices to 4 ounces per day).
- Avoid comments about your child's weight and being overly restrictive with food.
- Involve your child in planning meals and snacks. Encourage them to try new foods. Keep fresh fruit and vegetables on the table or in the refrigerator at all times. Watch portion sizes.
- Keep less healthy foods on high shelves where they won't be as noticeable.
- Encourage your child to eat slowly and pay attention to feeling full. Allow your child to stop eating when they say they are full. By learning hunger and fullness, your child will learn to eat enough, but not overeat.
- Provide your child with the opportunity to get at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity.
- Help your child develop social skills, self-confidence and self-esteem through praise and responsibility. These skills can help your child develop a healthy relationship with food.

### **A BMI at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile is considered “overweight.”**

**Take action:** Your child is at a weight that puts them at risk for diabetes, heart problems, high blood pressure and more. Now is the time to help your child make changes to avoid chronic health conditions in the future.

- Practice action points for “at risk of overweight” (see above).
- Provide healthy, well-balanced meals and snacks with appropriate portions.
- Supervise 60 minutes of physical activity to ensure safety and quality. (Limit TV or computer time to one hour.)
- Schedule regular visits with your child's doctor to monitor progress.
- Make an appointment with a Registered Dietitian to discuss your child's nutritional health. You will learn strategies to help your child achieve a healthy weight.

**Note:** *A one pound loss per week is a good start for kids up to age 11 and 2 pounds per week for ages 12 and older. Make small but consistent changes in calories (200 – 500 fewer calories per day).*

To learn more, visit [priorityhealth.com](http://priorityhealth.com).

References: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), [www.dhhs.gov](http://www.dhhs.gov) and [www.win.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov)

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