

## Body Mass Index for Teens 13 – 19 Years of Age

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

**Body Mass Index (BMI)** measures weight in relation to height and age. BMI is used to determine if your teen is developing proportionately compared with other teens of the same sex and age. There's no one ideal number. Healthy teens come in all shapes and sizes. By eating balanced meals, watching portion sizes and getting daily physical activity your teen will be healthy. **Always consult with your teens' doctor before making any changes to their nutrition 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 teen is at a healthy weight. Keep up the good work!

- Continue to offer balanced meals. Include whole grains, fat free/low-fat dairy, and at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Yogurt with fruit is a great idea!
- Eat meals together as a family, most days of the week. Be sure your teen eats breakfast daily.
- Model healthy food choices and watch portion sizes and your teen will, too.
- Limit meals outside of the home. For fast food, choose a grilled chicken sandwich, a salad or milk as one of your options. Check the low-fat menu items, too.
- Encourage at least 60 minutes of moderate exercise every day (multiple sessions throughout the day are fine).
- 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.” And a BMI at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile is considered “overweight.”**

**Take action:** Your teen is at a weight that may put them at risk for diabetes, high blood pressure and heart problems. Low self-esteem can be a problem, too. Now is the time to help your teen make lifestyle changes to achieve a healthy weight and avoid chronic health problems in the future.

- Practice action points for a “healthy weight” (see above).
- Visit your teen's doctor to develop a personal plan of action for nutrition and exercise. Schedule regular visits to monitor your teen's progress.
- Make an appointment with a Registered Dietitian to discuss your teen's nutritional health.
- Don't supersize meals outside of the home. The larger the portion — the larger the weight gain.
- Choose bottled water, sugar-free drinks and low-fat milk to drink (limit 100% fruit juices to 4 ounces per day).
- Try fat-free frozen yogurt instead of ice cream. It's a great treat.
- Keep less healthy foods on high shelves. Place fruit in front, on an eye-level shelf in the fridge.
- Avoid being overly restrictive with food. It can have a negative effect.
- Encourage your teen to eat slowly and pay attention to feeling full. Allow your teen to stop eating when they are full. By learning “fullness” cues, your teen will learn to not overeat.
- Involve your teen in meal planning. Encourage them to try new foods.
- Help your teen develop social skills, self-confidence and self-esteem through praise and responsibility. These skills can help your teen develop a healthy relationship with food.
- Be a positive role model. Don't make negative comments about your own weight, your teen's weight or anyone else's.
- Never use food as a reward. Try praise instead.

*Note: A two pound loss per week is a good start for teens ages 13 – 19. 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)