

Healthy weight assessment for children

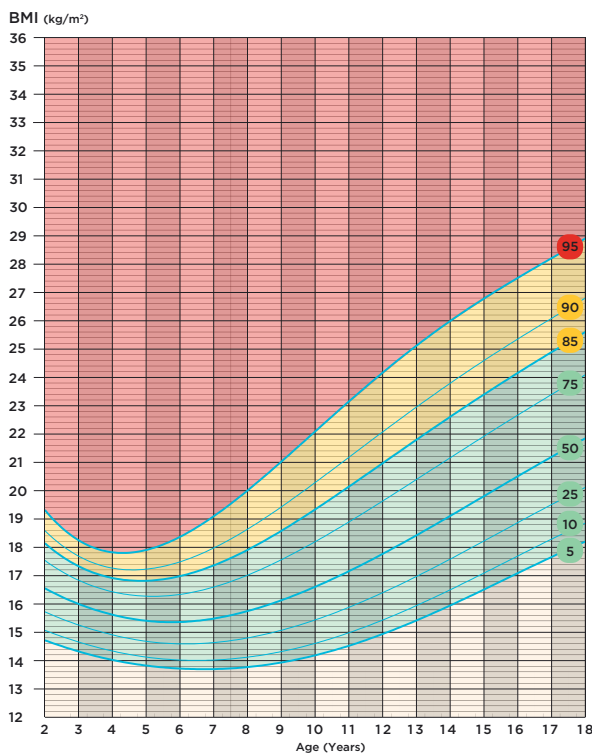
Information for patients, parents and guardians

This factsheet explains why it is important for children to maintain a healthy weight. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your child's healthcare team.

How do I know if my child is a healthy weight?

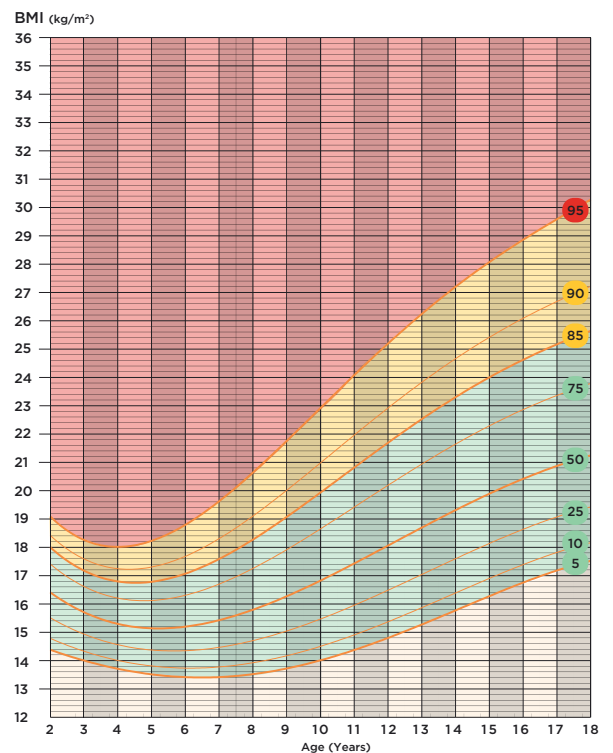
Children have become heavier in the UK over the last few years, so it has become more difficult to visually assess healthy weight.

BMI (body mass index) is an accurate way of assessing healthy weight. It is calculated by dividing weight (in kg) by the square of height (in metres).



- Below a healthy weight < 5th percentile (underweight)
- Healthy weight 5th percentile to < 85th percentile
- Above a healthy weight 85th percentile to < 95th percentile (overweight)
- Well above a healthy weight 95th percentile and above (obesity)

Boys



- Below a healthy weight < 5th percentile (underweight)
- Healthy weight 5th percentile to < 85th percentile
- Above a healthy weight 85th percentile to < 95th percentile (overweight)
- Well above a healthy weight 95th percentile and above (obesity)

Girls

You can work out your child's BMI on a calculator or a mobile phone.

1. Enter your child's weight.
2. Divide by your child's height.
3. Divide the result by your child's height again.

You can then plot the result on the BMI chart on the previous page (depending on their age and gender). Your nurse or doctor can help you with this. A healthy BMI result for children should be between the 9th and 91st percentile.

Why does my child's weight matter?

One third of children are overweight in the UK. Overweight children are at increased risk of a wide range of medical and psychological problems, including:

- high blood pressure
- type 2 diabetes
- breathing problems, such as sleep apnoea, asthma or worsening of existing asthma
- joint problems and pain
- poor self-esteem
- early puberty
- heart disease
- cancer
- infertility
- fatty liver disease, gallstones, reflux and heartburn

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's weight, please contact your child's GP, consultant or dietitian.

Useful links

- www.nhs.uk/change4life/about-change4life
- www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide
- www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well
- www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-children-under-five-years
- www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-does-sugar-in-our-diet-affect-our-health
- www.nhs.uk/change4life
- www.infantandtoddlerforum.org/portion-sizes-table-2015
- www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/home
- www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving
- www.mytimeactive.co.uk
- www.cwt.org.uk/publications
- www.bupa.co.uk/health-information/nutrition-diet/portion-size

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