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Strategies for
Better Living.

Addressing Your Child's BMI Report Card



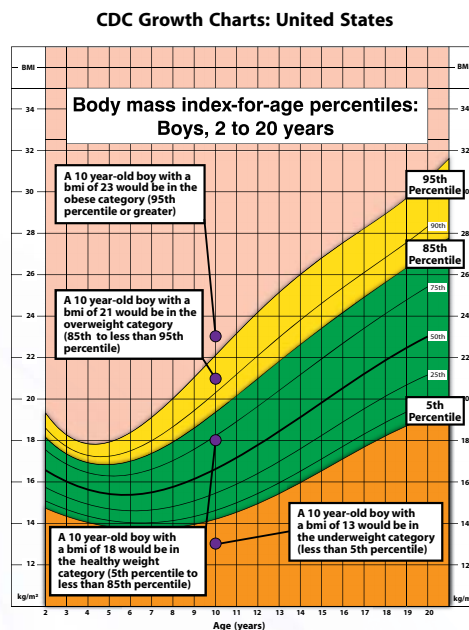
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BMI reporting in schools

Measuring the body mass index (BMI) of students in schools is one approach to identify and begin to address childhood overweight/obesity. BMI report cards are attracting much attention across the nation from researchers, school officials, parents, legislators, and the media. In 2005, the Institute of Medicine called upon the federal government to develop guidance for BMI measurement programs in schools. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the document entitled "Body Mass Index Measurement in Schools" to describe the purpose of school-based BMI surveillance and screening programs, examine current practices, and review research on BMI measurement programs.

What should parents do upon receiving a BMI report?

Upon receiving a BMI report card from school, or via an online BMI tool, many parents are left wondering what to do with this information. It is important to understand that BMI does not diagnose your child with a weight problem, rather it screens for potential problems. Upon receiving a BMI report card, seek the advice of your child's health care provider. A child may have a high BMI for his/her age and gender, but only your child's health care provider can determine if excess fat is a problem. A health



care provider would need to perform further assessments, which may include skin-fold thickness measurements, evaluations of diet and physical activity, family history, and other appropriate screenings.

What is BMI used for, and how is it calculated?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a number calculated from a person's weight and height. BMI provides a reliable indicator of body fatness for most people and is used to screen for weight categories that may lead to health problems including high blood pressure and

diabetes. BMI is calculated differently for adults than it is for children and teens. For children and teens, BMI is age- and gender-specific and is often referred to as BMI-for-age. The CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend the use of BMI to screen for overweight and obesity in children beginning at two-years of age.

Steps to prevent childhood overweight/obesity

- Encourage your children to be active everyday for at least 60 minutes and participate in activities as a family.
- Limit sedentary screen time (TV, video games, and computer) to no more than two hours a day.
- Provide plenty of fruits and vegetables with meals and snacks, and encourage your children to eat at least five servings of these foods daily.
- Provide water, and fat-free or 1% milk to drink most often. Offer only 100% juices in small portions. Do not provide sweetened beverages like soda, fruit punch and energy drinks.
- Set a good example by practicing healthy eating and fitness habits.

To learn more about BMI for children and teens please visit the CDC at:

http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/childrens_bmi/about_childrens_bmi.html

