



# Body Mass Index

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### 1 What is Body Mass Index?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a number calculated from a person's height and weight. BMI is a widely accepted screening tool for identifying overweight and obese people who may be at risk for weight-related health problems.

### 2 How is BMI Used with Children and Teens?

BMI is a reliable indicator of body mass for most children and teens. BMI helps health care providers monitor a child's growth. The United States' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that health care providers annually assess the BMI of all patients over the age of two.

To control for differences in body sizes due to gender and age, a child's BMI is commonly expressed as a percentile. BMI percentiles show how a child's measurements compare with others the same gender and age. For example, if a child has a BMI in the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile, 60% of the children of the same gender and age who were measured had a lower BMI. Health care providers use the BMI percentile to determine a child's weight status.

Weight Status Category	Percentile Range
<u>Underweight</u> : child weighs less than the healthy range for his or her age, gender and height.	Less than the 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile
<u>Healthy Weight</u> : child's weight is in the healthy range for his or her age, gender, and height.	5 <sup>th</sup> percentile to less than the 85 <sup>th</sup> percentile
<u>Overweight</u> : child weighs more than the healthy range for his or her age, gender, and height.	85 <sup>th</sup> to less than the 95 <sup>th</sup> percentile
<u>Obese</u> : the child weighs more than the healthy range for his or her age, gender, and height.	Equal to or greater than the 95 <sup>th</sup> percentile

When a child's BMI is high for his or her age, putting them into the overweight or obese category, the health care provider may perform additional tests; ask about nutrition and physical activity behaviors and family medical history. The information helps the health care provider know if the child has weight-related health risks and determine a treatment plan.

To allow health care provider(s) to accurately assess height and weight status, access body mass index (BMI) assessment data, growth charts, and treatment recommendations, height and weight data may be entered into the BMI Growth Module in the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR). Individuals have the right to request that their health care provider not enter height and weight data into the BMI Growth Module in the MCIR.

### 3 What Can I Do to Help My Child Have a Healthy BMI?

Here are some small things you can do:

- Provide a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every day.
- Limit fast food, take out and eating out.
- Reduce screen time (computer, video games and television) to no more than 2 hours per day.
- Get children up and moving at least one hour every day.
- Serve water and low fat milk instead of soda and drinks with lots of sugar.
- Choose lean meats, poultry, fish, lentils and beans for protein.
- Limit portion sizes and serve reasonably sized servings.
- Make physical activity part of your family's daily routine by taking family walks or playing active games together.
- Encourage healthy habits by making children aware of what they eat, drink and watch.
- Set a good example by eating healthy, being physically active, and limiting the time you spend in front of a screen.

### 4 What Happens to my Child's BMI Information?

Health care providers in Michigan can now enter height and weight data into the BMI Growth Module in the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) on their patients between the ages of 0 and 18. This helps health care providers make sure all children get the BMI assessment they need. The BMI Growth Module also provides tools to health care providers prevent and treat weight-related health problems. Data on your child can only be seen by authorized personnel, such as your health care provider and office staff (as necessary).

### 5 How can I learn more about BMI?

- Speak with your health care provider. They can answer your questions and suggest other sources of information.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 1-800-232-4636 or visit [www.cdc.gov/healthyweight](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight)



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