



# **PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN: BMI FOR CHILDREN**



Doctors say that childhood obesity has become a growing problem because children are eating more junk food and exercising less. With added weight gain comes a greater chance of suffering from diabetes, breathing problems, cancer, and heart disease, *even in young children*. Children who are overweight often have lower self-esteem. How do you know if your child is overweight? Ask your child's doctor. Doctors are supposed to calculate every child's body mass index (BMI) during each office visit. Body mass index (BMI) is a formula used to find the difference between a person's weight and height. This number is a guideline that is used to determine if a person is underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese. Ask your child's doctor what your child's BMI is and if there are any problems related to it.

## **Breaking Down BMI**

- BMI Formula = [Weight in pounds / Height in inches / Height in inches] x 703
- Children's body fat changes over the years as they grow. Also, girls and boys differ in their body fat as they mature.
- BMI-For-Age charts are used for children and teens 2 – 20 years of age.
- Since BMI doesn't directly measure body fat, it is possible to be overweight but not unhealthy. Some children who are very athletic and have larger muscles, may be overweight, but if they do not have extra body fat, then they do not need to lose weight. However, most children who are considered overweight or obese based on BMI results do need help with controlling their weight.



## **HOW TO HELP**

Parents, you can take steps now to protect the future health of your children. You can do little things to create a healthy home and encourage physical activity at home. It doesn't have to be hard work. If kids are up on their feet, it's three times more calories being burned than when they're sitting in front of the TV." Tips to creating a healthier home include:

- Turn on the stereo instead of the TV when you get home.
- Don't force younger children to 'clean their plates.' An important way to help children learn to eat healthy is for them to know that they can stop eating when they are full.
- While watching TV, have children "do the commercial boogie" and get active during commercial breaks.
- Start a 30-minute rule. Take a five-minute break after 30 minutes of activities like homework or playing video games.
- Set up an imagination station in the living room or den filled inexpensive games that require movement, such as a Hula-Hoop, balloons, basketball-type hoop games, Twister, jump rope, small hand weights, and stretch bands.

## Is Your Family In a Restaurant Rut?

Hey Mom and Dad! Tired of going out to eat and having no healthy food choices for your kids? Each of the health conscious restaurants below offer at least one healthy food item on their children's menus. Keep your eyes peeled because this list is growing! Help stamp out the obesity epidemic in this country. Demand healthy food for yourself and your children! And remember to look for the Healthy Kids Hero sticker next time your dining out.

- Boulevard Bistro
- Dan Marino's Town Tavern
- Dish at Baywalk
- Durango's Oak Fire Steak House
- Evos Fresh & Healthy
- Johnny Rockets
- Mangos Restaurant at the North Redington Beach Hilton
- Saffron's Caribbean Cuisine
- Salt Rock Grill
- Seminole Family Restaurant
- Subway
- The Stone Soup Café
- Ya Ya's



## Parents...Lead By Example!



Parents, you are the most important role model for children. Your influence on your child's physical development can have long-term health effects. Try to be a strong, consistent, and positive role model. If your child is taught to make healthy choices as a child they are more likely to make healthy choices in the future. Below are a few tips to encourage you to make healthier choices for your family.

### Get Movin'

Adult community exercise classes are currently being conducted in neighborhoods around Pinellas County. For more information please visit:  
[www.pinellaswellness.com](http://www.pinellaswellness.com)

- When packing a lunch for your children make a lunch for yourself.
- Make time as a family to participate in regular physical activities that everyone enjoys.
- Plan times when you prepare meals together. Children enjoy participating and can learn about healthy cooking.
- Avoid other activities during mealtimes such as watching TV.

**For more flyers contact:**  
Stacey Parker  
Pinellas County Health Dept.  
12420 130th Avenue North  
Largo, FL 33774  
Phone: 727-588-4040 Ext.

### Center LOCATIONS

205 Dr. ML King Street North  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701  
Phone: 727-824-6900

6350 76th Avenue North  
Pinellas Park, FL 33781  
Phone: 727-547-7780

310 North Myrtle Avenue  
Clearwater, FL 33755  
Phone: 727-469-5800

12420 130th Avenue  
N. Largo, FL 33774  
Phone: 727-588-4040

301 South Disston Avenue  
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689  
Phone: 727-942-5457

### Additional Resources

For more information about childhood obesity please visit the following websites:

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

<http://www.aap.org>

<http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/bmicalculator.html>



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