

The Importance of Body Mass Index (BMI) Testing in Children

Children are every parent's pride and joy. They are not only treasured family members, but also represent the most important resource of mankind; our future. Like everything else close to our heart, children need to be cared for. They need to be observed, groomed, and educated. We, the adults, have to secure their future possibilities and make sure they get a chance to develop to their full potential.

What you just read sounds like quite a nice theory, right? Unfortunately, reality does not always follow the script and, in this case, presents us with a totally different picture, one that points out that our children are not safe. Due to bad trend-setters, our offspring are actually cultivating some really nasty habits, especially when it comes to physical activities, or the lack thereof, and food consumption.

Nutrition is one of the key elements to maintaining good health. It is a set of rules nobody can escape, not even babies, toddlers, preschoolers, or teens. Not eating enough is unhealthy, and so is shoveling down too much. What kind of food we chew down is important, and giving in to the lure of fast-food joints is also not recommended. In other words: bad eating habits equal weight problems.

It is in a parent's nature to wonder if their children are overweight, underweight or just right. What should be obvious is not always easy to spot, and if there are concerns, the best way to ease the mind is to book a medical exam. A pediatrician can do a variety of tests to determine if a child's diet needs to be altered.

Of course, not all parents can afford to run to the doctor every time junior goes through another growing spurt. In that case, concerned guardians can fall back on handy screening tools, such as BMI, or Body Mass Index. Although first devised for adults, researchers have created a special BMI for children, called BMI-for-age. It is a formula that compares a child's height, weight, and age to determine how much body fat it has.

BMI results are compared to those of other children of the same age and gender. These statistics are kept on charts or tables, which can be retrieved online. Many websites also offer easy-to-use BMI calculators for children, as well as adults.

When it comes to the perfect weight for a child, a lot of factors have to be taken into account. Young children naturally start out with a high body fat content, but as they grow older, tend to become leaner. Boys and girls have different body compositions, and age also plays a key part.

BMI results for children are categorized as followed:

- BMI less than the 5th percentile = Underweight
- BMI 5th percentile up to the 85th percentile = Healthy Weight
- BMI 85th to less than the 95th percentile = At Risk of Overweight
- BMI greater than or equal to the 95th percentile = Overweight

Obesity among children is rising at a staggering rate and should be brought under control. Being overweight is unhealthy and can cause many preventable diseases, even in children. It also increases the risk of adult overweight, and lays the foundation for an unhealthy lifestyle. In conclusion: a concerned parent should seriously consider a BMI test if they believe their child is at risk.

About the Author

Australian Lifestyle & Fitness offers free online [BMI](#) tools. These include a [BMI](#) calculator and articles on BMI.

Source: <http://www.healthsnare.com>