



Healthy Growth Management for Children

Maintaining a healthy weight throughout childhood can make it easier for children to continue to manage their weight through adulthood. But, while it is important to encourage children to maintain a healthy weight, parents and caregivers should avoid making negative statements about food, weight, size, and body shape. Additionally, weight-loss diets can be harmful for children and potentially impair their growth and learning.

Because they are constantly growing, it can be difficult to provide healthy weight ranges for children. Instead, weight status is determined by calculating BMI and plotting it on a growth chart to determine a percentile range. You can learn more about BMIs for children, and determine your child's weight status using the [BMI calculator](#). BMI percentile and corresponding weight status are listed in the chart below.

Weight Status Category	Percentile Range for BMI
Underweight	Less than 5 th percentile
Healthy weight	5th percentile to less than the 85th percentile
Overweight	85th to less than the 95th percentile
Obese	Equal to or greater than the 95th percentile

If your child falls out of the healthy weight category, consult a health care provider to create an age-appropriate weight management strategy.



Encourage Healthy Eating:

- Keep on hand plenty of ready-to-eat vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain products.
- Offer low-fat or non-fat milk and dairy products, like string cheese or yogurt.
- Prepare lean meats, poultry, fish, lentils, and beans for protein.
- Serve kid-sized portions and let your child request more if he or she is still hungry.
- Make it easy for children to stay hydrated with water. Encourage them to get in the habit of filling and using their favorite water bottle every day.

Monitor calorie-rich treats:

Everything can be enjoyed in moderation, but save the calorie-rich, high-fat, high-sugar, or salty snacks and beverages for special occasions or treats, rather than as everyday regulars.

Keep children active:

Be active with your child each day to help maintain a healthy weight. Walk, ride bikes, swim, play ball, or whatever you both enjoy doing that gets you moving together!