

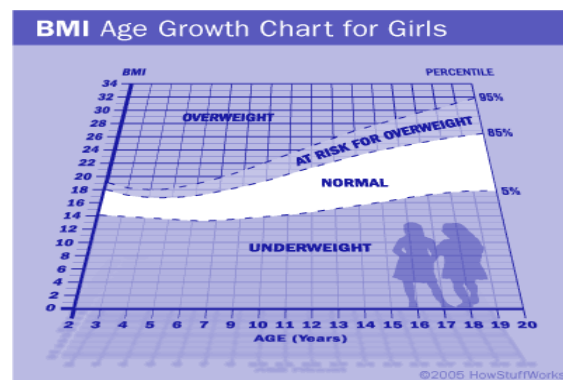
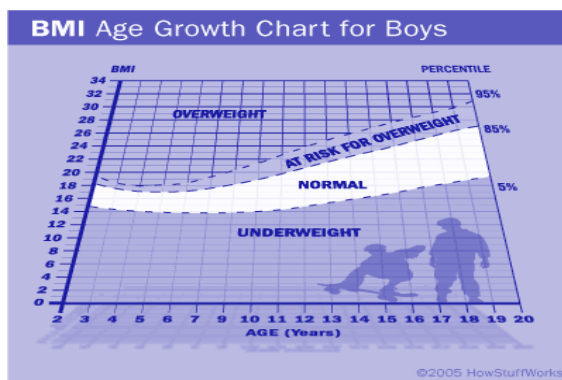
Children's Body Mass Index (BMI)

WHAT IS BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)?

- BMI is a screening tool used to identify possible weight issues for children. A child's height, weight, age and sex are used to estimate how much body fat a child has.
- BMI-for-age is used for children 2-20 years of age and takes into account sex and age, whereas adult BMI does not. BMI for adults and children are figured the same way, however, the criteria used to interpret the meaning is different

HOW OFTEN SHOULD BMI BE TAKEN?

- Beginning at age 2, your child's health care provider will determine his or her BMI at every routine checkup.
- For best results, BMI measurements should be taken at least twice a year to view a child's growth as a pattern over time. If the provider identifies a significant increase in a child's BMI over time, body fat can be monitored carefully along with changes in eating and exercise habits to help prevent obesity and overweight.



HOW IS BMI CALCULATED?

- BMI is sex and age specific because boys and girls differ in their body fat content as they mature and the amount of body fat changes with age.
- A child's BMI is plotted on a growth chart, such as the chart above, and compared to other children of the same age and sex.
- Anyone can calculate BMI, however, a trained person, such as a health care provider can determine a child's BMI and ensure the number is accurate, as well as, discuss what the results mean.

WHAT DO BMI FIGURES MEAN?

- BMI is one tool used to identify whether or not a child is growing in a healthy way.
- BMI is a screening tool that identifies children who are at risk for becoming overweight or underweight.
- In older children and teens, there is a significant relationship between BMI and the amount of body fat. Those with a high BMI reading are most likely to have weight problems later in life.
- BMI is informative and raises awareness about health risks associated with obesity and being overweight.

HOW CAN I FIGURE BMI?

- CDC has a great website for figuring BMI on adults and children <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/> and additional resources.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & NUTRITION?

- Visit www.actionforhealthykids.org for more resources or speak with your health care provider.