

off the mark by Mark Parisi
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STRATEGIES FOR HEALTHY EATING:

- Eat meals as a family
- Stock up on a variety of healthy foods and snacks
- Be a role model to your children by eating healthy
- Do not battle over foods
- Get your children involved in meal planning and preparation

(Kids Health, 2006)

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Childhood Obesity

A Growing Epidemic



(University at Buffalo, 2006)

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CHILDHOOD OBESITY DEFINED



The prevalence of obesity has been increasing at an alarming rate over the past two decades. The National Center for Health Statistics (2002) had estimated that sixteen percent of children ages six to nineteen years of age are overweight. With the increasing growth of childhood obesity in North America, the medical community is now paying attention to this epidemic since early 2000.

About 15.5 percent of adolescents (ages 12 to 19) and 15.3 percent of children (ages 6 to 11) are obese (National Center for Health Statistics, 2002). The increase in obesity among North American youths over the past two decades is dramatic.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY:

- Hypertension
- Type II Diabetes
- Orthopedic Complications
- Respiratory (Asthma)
- Psychosocial Effects & Stigma



BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)

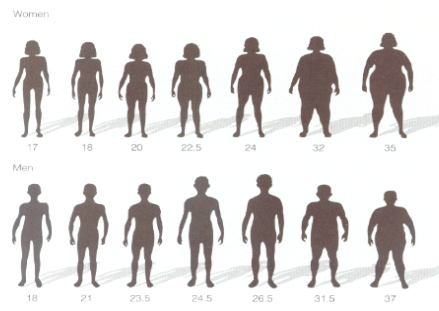
BMI is a mathematical formula used to assess relative body weight. The measure correlates highly with body fat. It is calculated as weight in kilograms divided by the square of the height in meters (kg/m^2) (American Heart Association [AHA], 2006).

$\text{BMI} = \text{weight (kg)} / \text{height}^2 \text{ (meters}^2\text{)}$ (AHA, 2006)

To convert pounds to kilograms, divide the amount in pounds by 2.2 to give you the amount in kilograms.

BMI is used differently with children than it is with adults. In children and teens, body mass index is used to assess underweight, overweight, and risk for overweight. Children's body fatness changes over the years as they grow (CDCP, 2005).

BMI-for-age is plotted on gender specific growth charts. These charts are used for children and teens two to 20 years of age (CDCP, 2005).



Sources: Reprinted from material of the Dietitians of Canada.

(RuthK, 2006)



TIPS FOR PARENTS

Children can not obtain all the nutrients a day through three meals alone, they need smaller portions of food more frequently.

Do not ban children's snacks, plan them: most children snack on prepackaged food which are high in calories and low in nutrients. provide healthy snack choices so children will learn to make healthy food choices in the future.

Children will typically grab whatever is close and easy. Try to have vegetables and fruits cut up and ready to eat.

Children should drink no more than two 6 ounce servings of fruit juice a day.

Read nutrition labels. Sometimes foods that say "low fat" are high in sugar.

Limit the amount of television your children watch. This will help your child be more active and lessen the number of advertisements featuring unhealthy high-calorie foods.

(Mayo Clinic, 2006)