

## Healthy Weight for Healthy Children – Spring 2004

### How We Identify Healthy Weight

At your child's well-care exams, his or her physical development is charted and monitored through measurements for height, weight and body mass index (BMI). The BMI is a relatively new measurement that uses the relationship between height and weight to indicate body "fatness" and potential weight problems that have associated health risks.

Your child's height and weight will be measured and the BMI score will be calculated using a "BMI wheel" or a computer program. BMI can also be calculated manually by this formula: child's weight divided by the height squared and multiplied by 703. The BMI number will be charted on a special graph that allows us to track changes over the childhood years, as well as identify BMI scores that appear high.

### BMI Scores and What They Mean

- A BMI of under 75% indicates a healthy weight!
- A BMI between 75-84% is borderline and family history risks should be evaluated.
- A BMI between 85-94% indicates a significant risk of overweight, a need for screening for other risk factors, and preventive measures such as a plan for weight maintenance.
- A BMI of 95% and over indicates overweight, a need for additional assessment for other risk and health factors, and a plan for weight maintenance or weight loss depending on the child's age.

### Ten Steps to a Healthy Weight

- Limit time spent in sedentary activities, including television, videos, and computer games.
- Encourage your child to be involved in active play at least one hour per day.
- Encourage schools to promote active play at recess and daily physical education classes.
- Make a list of ingredients for healthy meals and stock your kitchen with these items.
- Set out healthy snacks for your children, such as fruit, cut up veggies, low-fat yogurt, string cheese, whole-grain crackers, air-popped popcorn and pretzels.
- Plan weekly menus to include low fat entrees and plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Make better choices when eating out. Many restaurants offer low fat choices.
- Tempt hungry kids with healthy snacks after school, before bed, or following sports practice.
- Limit the amount of "liquid calories" from soda pop, fruit drinks and other sweetened beverages, offering water, milk and 100% fruit juice instead.
- Resist the temptation of making every activity an eating activity. Instead of buying treats at movies, sporting events etc., eat before you go or pack your own healthy snack.

For more information please visit: <http://nutritionforkids.com>