

Teens: Are You Worried About Your Weight?

Television, radio, newspapers, friends, and family often share very different information about what a “healthy weight” is, and how to reach it. It’s hard to know who (or what) to believe.

What We Know:

- If you’re underweight or overweight, and not active – you have higher risks for a number of health problems.
- Your food choices and activity level affect your weight (higher fat and sugar food choices and less activity promote weight gain in most – muscle uses more calories than fat).
- Concerns about weight can cause anxiety and depression for many, which can lead to low self-esteem.
- Healthy people come in a wide range of sizes and shapes – a “perfect one size fits all body” doesn’t exist.
- There are several “tried and true” methods used to determine a healthy weight.
 - Body Mass Index (BMI) - measures your body weight in relation to your height, and your risk for weight related health problems (It doesn’t directly measure body fat, but is considered a reliable substitute.) Low or high numbers may suggest health risks.
 - Growth charts – help to track your growth over time.
 - Waist measurements – health risks go up with higher waist sizes.

Your healthy weight takes into account:

- Your weight in relation to your height (your BMI)
- The amount of body fat you have and where it is located
- Your risks for health problems related to weight



To decide if you want to make a change, think about these questions:

- How do I feel about my body?
- Do I get tired easily?
- Do I have the energy to do the things I enjoy?
- Do I (or my family) have weight related health conditions (diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, difficulty breathing, swelling in hands or feet, etc)?

What Your BMI Percentile Number Means:

Less than the 5th percentile: May be underweight. This may be OK, but warrants a check. Be sure to start the day with a quick breakfast or snack. Try a slice of leftover pizza.

5th percentile to less than the 85th percentile: Healthy weight. A healthy weight & smart eating can help you reach your highest potential. Be sure to do some fun activities each day.

85th percentile to less than the 95th percentile: Overweight. Eating smart and moving more can boost your energy and help you look & feel your best.

95th percentile and higher: Obese. 3 healthy meals plus 2 snacks and some fun activities are a great start. Be sure to watch your drinks. Regular soft drinks & fruit juices can pack on the pounds. Just one extra 12 oz. serving (1 can of soda or juice) per day can add 10 extra pounds a year. Try a bottle of water!!

5 Steps to a Healthy Weight: Family Fun, Food and Fitness

Get off the diet roller coaster –
And take these five simple steps to whole family health.

BE ACTIVE

Change the “E” word from exercise to enjoyment. There’s no need for expensive health club memberships or fancy exercise equipment. Just get physical for a total of 30 to 60 minutes a day, three brisk 10 minute walks is a fabulous start. Just do it – and see how great you feel. Fun is also the key to family fitness, so:

- **Make family time active – head to the park with a ball, or a Frisbee, or a kite.**
- **Walk around the ball field or school while the kids practice (or play a game).**
- **Plan active vacations – biking, hiking, swimming, or boating.**

BE REALISTIC

Make small changes in what you eat.

BREAKFAST is a tasty time to get a power surge for the day. Look for high-fiber and lower-fat choices:

- * **Oatmeal, raisins, and low-fat milk**
- * **Leftover cheese pizza with OJ**
- * **Toaster waffles with fruit topping**
- * **Whole grain bagel with PB-and-J**

BE FLEXIBLE

Balance what you eat thru the day.

LUNCHESES can be lighter when you are going out for a big dinner. Look for easy ways to lower fat intake.

- * *Share a small fries with a friend.*
- * **Skip the mayo on your sandwiches.**
- * **Add a fruit to your usual fast food.**
- * **Choose 1% (low-fat) or less milk.**

BE ADVENTUROUS

Expand your tastes with produce.

SNACKS are the smart way to get a jump-start on eating more fruits and veggies every day (aim for at least 2 ½ - 4 ½ cups each day – the amount needed for a meal plan ranging from 1,200 to 2,000 calories).

- * **Baby carrots + low-fat dip**
- * **Banana + a carton of 1% milk**
- * **Veggie juice + low-fat string cheese**
- * **Canned pineapple + cottage cheese**

BE SENSIBLE

Enjoy all foods – just don’t overdo it.

DINNERTIME is the right time to enjoy moderation and to listen carefully to your signals from your stomach.

- * **Try eating from smaller size plates.**
- * **Start with moderate portion sizes.**
- * **Turn off the TV and focus on food.**
- * **Eat slowly and chew thoroughly.**

**Celebrating
Healthy
Families**

