What is BMI?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a ratio of an individual's height and weight. BMI is used as a screening tool to identify possible health risks such as diabetes, heart disease and asthma.

What is BMI percentile?
BMI percentiles are used to assess the size and growth patterns of individual children and teens compared to other kids their age. The BMI percentile has four categories.

Weight Status Category	Percentile Range
<5%	Underweight
5 to <85%	Healthy Weight
85 to <95%	Overweight
>95%	Obese

What should I do if my child's BMI percentile is outside the healthy weight range?

1. Schedule a checkup for your child.
2. Take the BMI screening results to the appointment.
3. Ask your healthcare provider to explain the BMI results and make recommendations for your child's health.

For additional resources about BMI, visit:
http://missourifamilies.org/nutrition/bmi.htm

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Contact your local Extension Office and ask about local nutrition programs and resources in your area.

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Your Child's Health and BMI

Brochure adapted with permission from Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity

Growing Healthy Kids At home:

- Encourage your child to eat breakfast every day. Children who eat breakfast are more likely to get all the nutrients they need for the day. Breakfast also primes the brain for learning and concentrating.
- Play with your kids. Your child needs at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Short spurts of activity (10 minutes at a time) count and can easily add up to 60 minutes a day!
- Turn off the TV. Doctors recommend that you limit the amount of time your child watches TV and plays video games to no more than one or two hours a day.
- Set a good example for your kids. Eat fruits and vegetables at meals and buy fewer high-fat and high-calorie foods, such as chips, cookies and candy.
- Balance food calories with calories burned through physical activity. Instead of putting your child on a diet, encourage healthy food choices and active play. In most cases, the goal for your child is to maintain a healthy weight as he or she grows, not to lose weight.
- Avoid making negative comments about your child's weight. Explain to your child that kids' bodies come in many different shapes and sizes.
- Encourage your child to drink water or milk instead of soda pop or sugary juice drinks. Limit 100 percent fruit juice to 4-6 ounces for children 1-6 and 8-12 ounces for children 7-18 years old.
- Do not use food as an reward — try non-food rewards such as:
  - Letting your child plan a special outing.
  - Reading a bedtime story of your child's choice.
  - Having a family game night, and let your child choose the game.
- Involve your children in shopping for and preparing food. Children are more likely to eat what they help prepare.

- Eat together as a family. Eating together helps children learn to enjoy a variety of foods.
- Get the whole family involved. Set family food and fitness goals together.

Growing Healthy Kids At school or in your community:

- Pack fruits, vegetables and whole grain foods in your child's lunch.
- Encourage your child's school to provide daily physical education and recess.
- Send healthy snacks with your child for class parties and celebrations. Some healthy snack ideas include:
  - Low-fat granola bars
  - Trail mix
  - Sliced fruits or vegetables
  - Low-fat pudding
  - Pita bread and hummus
  - Pretzels
  - Whole grain crackers and cheese