



# What is **BMI** and why is it important?

**BMI** (Body Mass Index) is a number calculated by your child's healthcare provider using your child's height and weight. BMI is a good tool to watch your child's growth over time because it looks at their height and weight in relation to each other.

## **BMI for children:**

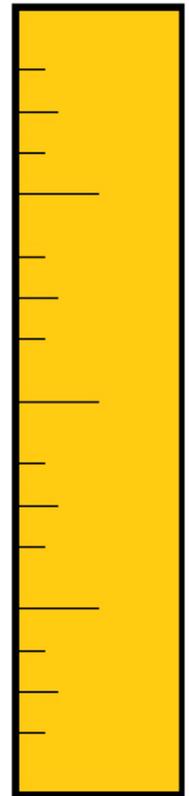
- can help identify a child age 2 and over as underweight, a healthy weight, at risk of overweight or overweight.
- is a good indicator of whether a child has too much, too little, or the right amount of body fat. Children with too much body fat have higher risks of health problems.
- is better than just looking at a child's weight or at their growth chart.

The amount of body fat changes with age, and is different for girls than for boys, a child's BMI is put on a special growth chart to compare them to other girls or boys their age.

This information can help guide your child towards a healthy weight and a healthy life.

A healthy weight reduces the risk of developing high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or type 2 diabetes in children, youth and adults.

**It is important to talk to your health care provider about your child's BMI!**



For more Fact Sheets please go to [www.ParentHelpNH.org](http://www.ParentHelpNH.org)

Children's Hospital at Dartmouth, Injury Prevention Center, NH Department of Health and Human Services, NH Department of Education, NH Pediatric Society, SAFE KIDS NH & Partnership for a DrugFreeNH.org