

Current Status of Health and Physical Activity:

Focus on Youth*

- Nine out of ten parents think their children are fit, but only one child in three really is.
- Thirty-six percent of young people have negative or neutral attitudes toward physical activity.
- At age 10, 45% of children say they participate, or intend to participate, in youth sports. Among 18-year-olds, only 26% actually participate.
- Kids participate in sports and exercise primarily for fun and socialization.
- The average child consumes more than 20 ounces of soda each day.
- The average child spends 20% of his/her waking hours watching television but only 43 minutes engaging in moderate physical activity.
- The average child spends less than 15 minutes a day performing vigorous physical activity.

*www.fitnessforyouth.umich.edu/parents.html

Center for Physical Activity and Health in Youth

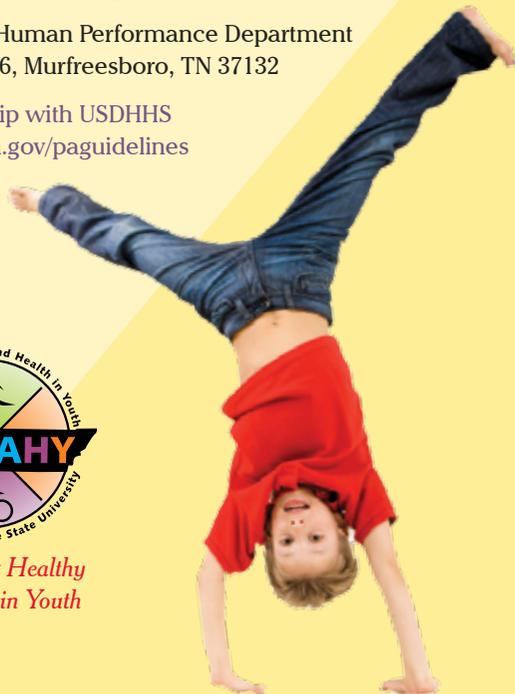
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In partnership with USDHHS
www.health.gov/paguidelines



Promoting Healthy
Lifestyles in Youth



Parent Resources

Federal

CDC Healthy Body Weight
www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/childrens_BMI/about_childrens_BMI.html

State

Get Fit TN
www.getfitTN.com

America on the Move
www.americaonthemove.org

Girls on the Run
<http://gotmashville.org/>

References

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Road Map to Success

Preventing Obesity in Youth: A Parent Resource Guide



Excess weight and obesity in American youth

For children and adults, the health-related benefits of performing moderate-to-vigorous physical activity include improved cardiovascular function, blood pressure control, prevention and maintenance of chronic disease, and weight management.¹

Despite these benefits, 56% of young boys and 74% of young girls do not engage in daily physical activity, opting to participate in more sedentary behavior such as television viewing and computer gaming.² This inactive lifestyle has caused an increase in unhealthy body weight. Since the late 1970s, the prevalence of obesity in youth has risen from 5% to 12.4% in children aged 2–5 years, 6.5% to 17% in children aged 6–11 years, and 5% to 17.6% among adolescents aged 12–19 years.³

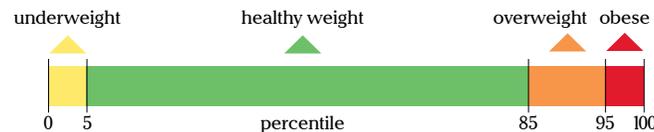


Consequences of Unhealthy Body Weight on Physical Functioning and Quality of Life

Those who are overweight during childhood or adolescence are more likely to be overweight as adults.⁴ The long-term consequences of adverse levels of body weight, physical inactivity, and poor dietary habits include increased risk for premature death and the development of heart disease, diabetes, cancers, and high blood pressure.⁵ By promoting healthy physical activity practices at an early age, parents can help reduce the risk of overweight, obesity, and chronic disease in children and adolescents.⁶

Using Body Mass Index (BMI) to Monitor Body Weight in Youth

Due to the natural growth and development of children, healthy weight ranges are not recommended for youth. As an alternative, the body mass index (BMI), the ratio of a person's weight to height squared (kg/m^2), can be used as a screening tool for potential weight problems and associated health conditions. For children and adolescents, BMI can be plotted against age to obtain a percentile ranking. This percentile can then be used to classify youth in terms of weight status. To calculate your child's BMI-for-age percentile and determine his/her weight status, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnpabmi>.



For weight loss and weight maintenance, all children should be encouraged to meet the Physical Activity Guidelines for Youth recommended by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.

What Are the Physical Activity Guidelines for Youth?

Research indicates that excessive levels of weight and fatness in youth can be reduced by engaging in physical activity of moderate to vigorous intensity for 60 minutes daily. It is important for young people to choose a variety of activities that are appropriate for their age and enjoyable.

Note: Some activities, such as bicycling and running, can be moderate or vigorous, depending upon the level of effort.



Aerobic, moderate intensity

- Active recreation such as hiking, skateboarding, and rollerblading
- Bicycle riding
- Brisk walking

Aerobic, vigorous intensity

- Active games involving running and chasing, such as tag
- Bicycle riding
- Jumping rope
- Martial arts
- Running
- Soccer, ice or field hockey, basketball, swimming, and tennis

Muscle-strengthening

- Tug-of-war games
- Push-ups or modified push-ups
- Resistance exercises using body weight or resistance bands
- Rope or tree climbing
- Sit-ups
- Swinging on playground equipment

Bone-strengthening

- Hopscotch games
- Hopping, skipping, jumping
- Running
- Sports such as gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, and tennis

