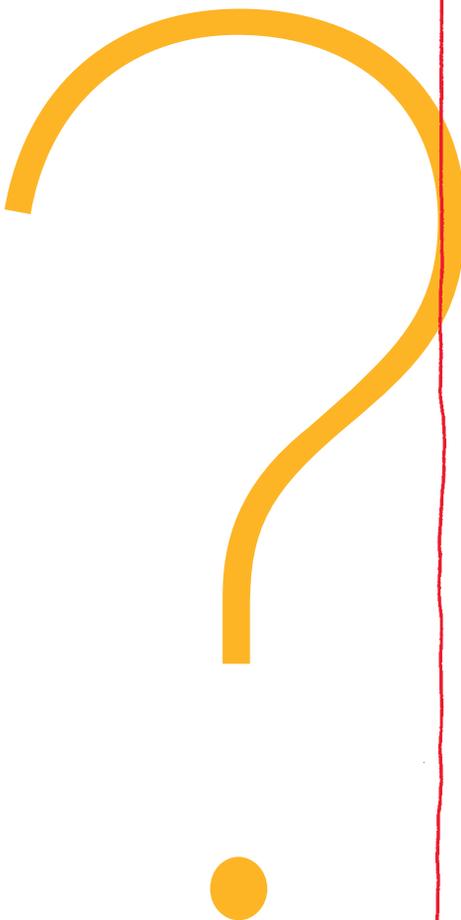


# IN THE KNOW **FAQ**



## 1. What is Body Mass Index?

Body mass index (BMI) is a number calculated from a child's height and weight (age 2 and older). BMI is an inexpensive and easy-to-perform method of screening for weight categories that may lead to health problems. For children and teens, BMI is age and gender specific and is often referred to as BMI-for-age. (Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))

## 2. What is a BMI percentile?

After BMI is calculated for children and teens, the BMI number is plotted on the CDC BMI-for-age growth charts (for either girls or boys) to obtain a percentile ranking.

WEIGHT STATUS CATEGORY	PERCENTILE RANGE
Underweight	Less than the 5th percentile
Healthy Weight	5th percentile to less than the 85th percentile
Overweight	85th to less than the 95th percentile
Obese	Equal to or greater than the 95th percentile

## 3. How is BMI used with children and teens?

BMI is used as a screening tool to identify possible weight problems for children and teens. The CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend the use of BMI-for-age to screen for overweight and obesity in children beginning at 2 years of age. BMI is not a diagnostic tool. For example, a child may have a high BMI-for-age and gender, but to determine if excess fat is a problem, the health care team would need to perform further assessments. These assessments might include evaluations of diet, physical activity, family history, skin fold thickness, and other appropriate health screenings.

## 4. What about the growth chart?

This is where the beauty of pediatrics shines through. We love our growth charts. The tracking of BMI over time on a CDC BMI-for-age growth chart provides clinical information for assessment, education, and intervention.

## 5. How do you take a proper height and weight measurement of a patient 2 years or older?

For detailed instructions on this, visit the *Measuring and Weighing* tab in this toolkit.

continued

## 6. How do I calculate BMI?

The majority of health care practices use an electronic medical record (EMR) and BMI is calculated automatically. However, you can also calculate BMI yourself by following the steps below:

Use a BMI wheel, calculator (see below for a link to the CDC), or the BMI formula:

**BMI (English) = weight (lb) ÷ [height (in) x height (in)] x 703**

**BMI (Metric) = weight (kg) ÷ [height (cm) x height (cm)]**

**BMI Percentile Calculator for Children and Teens:**

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/dnpabmi/Calculator.aspx>

## 7. How do I take a proper weight and length measurement of a patient less than 2 years old?

For detailed instructions on this, visit the *Measuring and Weighing* tab in this toolkit.

## 8. What does 5-2-1-0 stand for?

- 5** or more fruits & vegetables
- 2** hours or less recreational screen time\*
- 1** hour or more of physical activity
- 0** sugary drinks, more water

\*Keep TV/Computer out of the bedroom. No screen time under the age of 2.

## 9. What is the science behind the 5-2-1-0 message?

There is a scientific rationale supporting each component of the 5-2-1-0 message. The 5-2-1-0 message is an easy way to begin an open discussion about the ways to increase physical activity and healthy eating. For more information on this, visit the *Step 1: Engage* tab of this toolkit.

## 10. Will discussion of the 5-2-1-0 message lead to an increase in eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa?

There is no current evidence that bringing up healthy behaviors in a positive manner leads to disordered eating. The 5-2-1-0 message provides an easy way to discuss general health subjects that apply to everyone. Its purpose is to spread healthy behaviors. A study in a medical journal (Austin, et al., Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, vol. 159: 225-230) supported the idea that interventions like *Let's Go!* may actually help prevent eating disorders in early adolescent girls.

**BMI**  
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better  
health



[www.letsgo.org](http://www.letsgo.org)