

Dear Parent /Guardian,

Recently your child was screened for height and weight, and body mass index (BMI) was determined. Your child's results of the screening are as follows:

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ BMI: \_\_\_\_\_ BMI-for-age-percentile: \_\_\_\_\_

The CDC (Center for Disease Control) has set guidelines for the BMI-for-age percentiles that indicate various classifications of weight and risk of disease associated with each classification.

Underweight	BMI <5%
Within normal range	BMI 6% to 84%
At risk of overweight	BMI 85% to 94%
Overweight	BMI >95%

You are encouraged to share your child's BMI results with your child's health care provider, especially if they fall within the categories of underweight, at risk for overweight, or overweight as listed above. **Your health care provider is in the best position to evaluate your child's overall health.**

Many times, lifestyles contribute to weight disorders and the resulting health risks. Changes in lifestyle therefore can reduce these risks and improve our health and future health potential. The most common lifestyle changes that need to be made include changes in food intake and changes in exercise/activity patterns. If your child struggles with being underweight/overweight, be patient and realize that this is a chronic problem. Children can probably best make these changes if the whole family is involved and practices good eating and exercise habits.

You may also help your child to modify some behaviors that may be associated with weight issues including:

- Limiting television, video games, and computer time
- Healthy eating habits (3 well balanced meals of average size and no skipping of meals – don't force your child to clean their plate if they report that they are full as this may not help them develop their own sense of hunger and fullness).
- Limit snacks to 2 low calorie snacks per day such as raw fruits and vegetables or other low-fat snacks.
- Stock only healthy foods in your home as children can only eat what is available to them. If you provide only healthy choices, they will maintain a healthy diet.
- Encourage your child to drink 4-6 glasses of water each day. Avoid regular soft drinks, as they are high in sugar content and calories.

Regular physical activity can also assist your child in maintaining or achieving a healthy lifestyle. Try to find activities that your child enjoys doing. Here are some tips to help your family to increase their physical activity:

- Walk or ride your bike instead of driving for short distances
- Take a walk with a friend or walk the family dog each day
- Use stairs instead of the escalator or elevators
- Park your car at the end of the parking lot and walk to the entrance of the mall or store
- Encourage regular exercise for 20-30 minutes 4-5 times each week. This can include walking, jogging, swimming, bike riding, roller-blading, riding a skateboard, etc. It can also include playing a sport such as basketball, volleyball, tennis, soccer, etc.
- Go for a routine family walk or bike ride in the neighborhood or local park.

It is important to help your child maintain their self-esteem. Some tips to help support your child include:

- Do not withhold or deprive your child of food when he/she is hungry
- Avoid overly nagging your child about his/her weight or eating habits
- Avoid teasing
- Focus on healthy lifestyle habits, not weight loss
- Admire your child (and all people) for their inner self and not their appearance
- Make sure your child knows that being overweight doesn't change what kind of person he/she is or how much you love him/her
- Never tell your child that he/she is fat
- Avoid strict diets

There are many resources that can be used to get more information. Some helpful websites are:

[www.kidnetic.com](http://www.kidnetic.com); [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) ; [www.keepkidshealthy.com](http://www.keepkidshealthy.com)  
[www.wellpoint.com/healthy\\_parenting/index.html](http://www.wellpoint.com/healthy_parenting/index.html);

Other resources besides your health care provider are:

The county extension office, the local library, a dietician.