

# Why your child's weight matters

## Weighing and measuring in schools

Every year, throughout the country, children in Reception and Year 6 have their height and weight measured as part of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP). If you have a child in one of these years, you should receive a letter from your local NHS with more information about the programme. Trained staff from your local NHS will weigh and measure your child in their clothes at school. They will take care to ensure that the measurements are done sensitively and in private, and your child's results will not be shared with teachers or other children. Your child does not have to participate, but we urge you to encourage your child to take part.

## Why is it important that my child takes part?

Every child measured is contributing to the national and regional picture about how children are growing. The more children that take part, the clearer that picture will be. The information collected helps your local NHS to plan and provide better health and leisure services for the children in your area.

## Will I find out my child's results and what will the results tell me?

How you get your child's results will depend on how the programme is run in your area. Some areas will automatically send parents a letter with their child's results after the measurement. In other areas, parents will be able to ask their local NHS for their child's results. The letter you receive from your local NHS should advise you about this.

The results will tell you your child's height and weight when they were measured and whether

this means they are underweight, a healthy weight or overweight for their age, sex and height.

The results letter should include advice and support on helping your family lead a healthy lifestyle and who to contact for further information.

## What happens to the results?

Results from all schools in your area will be gathered together and held securely by your local NHS and then sent to the Department of Health – but these will not include details that could identify your child, such as name or date of birth. The Department of Health will analyse this anonymous information to look at trends in children's heights and weights across England. This information will then be used at a national level and in your local area to develop services to help people improve their own and their children's health.

## Why is a healthy weight important?

Research shows that modern living makes it more difficult to be a healthy weight. If we carry on as we are, 9 out of 10 children may grow up with dangerous amounts of fat in their bodies, putting them at a greater risk of developing cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease in later life.

Parents often cannot tell if their child is overweight and instead think they are a healthy weight. The results from your local NHS can therefore help parents make decisions about their child's lifestyle and make important changes if necessary.

To help your child achieve and maintain a healthy weight, encourage the whole family to enjoy eating healthily and being active. Children who see their parents, grandparents and carers following a healthy and active lifestyle tend to join in and learn by example. These habits become a normal part of everyday life for the whole family.

**For more information on helping your family lead a healthy life, please turn over...**

# Handy tips for a healthy family

These days, modern life can mean that we're not as active as our parents or grandparents were. With so many opportunities to watch TV or play computer games, and with so much convenience and fast food available, we don't move about as much or eat as well as we used to.

Change4life is there to give you the support and info you need to help your kids eat well, move more and live longer. Here are a few things you can do that will make a difference to the health of your kids.



- Sugar swaps**  
Go for no added sugar options wherever possible.
- Snack check**  
Cut down or swap unhealthy snacks for something like fruit.
- 5 A DAY**  
It's easier than you think to get the right amount of fruit and veg – fresh, frozen, canned, dried and juice all count.

- Meal time**  
Try for 3 meals a day, at regular times – and don't skip breakfast!
- Me size meals**  
Remember kids' tummies are much smaller than adults' – so they need smaller portions.
- Cut back fat**  
Compare food labels and go for lower fat varieties.

- 60 active minutes**  
Kids need at least 60 minutes of physical activity over the day to get their hearts beating faster.
- Up and about**  
Any kind of moving is better than sitting on the sofa – so get going!

For more information about how to keep your kids fit and healthy visit [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life) or call 0300 123 4567