The National Child Measurement Programme

Measuring height and weight in schools

Every year, throughout the country, over a million children in Reception and Year 6 have their height and weight measured as part of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP). If your child is 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 measure your child's height and weight, 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?

With one in three children in year 6 overweight or obese and one in five in reception it can be hard to tell, just from looking at a child, whether or not they are a healthy weight. That is why an objective assessment of how a child is growing, by measuring their height and weight, is important. Collectively, information about children’s weight helps to build a national and local picture on 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?

Some areas will automatically send parents a letter with their child’s results after the measurement. In other areas, parents can ask for their child’s results. How you get your child’s results will depend on how the programme is run in your area – the letter from your local NHS to let you know about the programme in your child’s school will advise you of 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. Your local NHS, which provides the results, can also give advice and support to help your family lead a healthy lifestyle, and the results letter will include contact details you can use to arrange this.

What happens to the results?

Results from all the schools in your area will be gathered together and held securely by your local NHS and then sent to the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) – but not details that could identify your child, such as name or date of birth. The HSCIC collects and holds data on health on behalf of the NHS. This information is used to produce reports which assist local NHS organisations in developing services to help families make healthy lifestyle changes.

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, just by looking, if their child is overweight. The results 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 your kids’ health.

Meal time
Try for 3 meals a day – at regular times – and don’t skip breakfast!

Sugar swaps
Go for no-added-sugar options wherever possible.

Up and about
Any kind of moving is better than sitting on the sofa – so get going.

Me size meals
Remember kids’ tummies are much smaller than adults’ – so they need smaller portions.

Snack check
Cut down on swap unhealthy snacks for something like fruit.

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.

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.