



HEALTH NEWS: Childhood Obesity Early Warning Device

Analysis Supports Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening for Early Detection of Obesity in Children

Parents Urged to Ask Doctors to Check Children's BMI

Body Mass Index (BMI) screening is recommended for early detection of overweight and obesity in children, according to a soon-to-be-released analysis titled *Screening for Obesity in Pediatric Primary Care: A Review of the Literature*. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) endorse this recommendation and urge parents to ask doctors to check their children's BMI, a formula based on weight and height measurements, which already are routinely measured when children visit the doctor.

Approximately 15% of children between the ages of six and 19 are overweight or obese, and since 1980, the number of overweight children and adolescents has more than doubled.

BMI screening is recommended for children between the ages of 2 and 20 and can help spot the signs of unhealthy weight gain early on. Appropriate measures then can be taken to prevent long-term health complications that often stem from being overweight or obese. In addition to BMI screening, AAP recommends that physicians encourage parents to promote healthy eating among their children, increase their physical activity levels and limit television and video time to two hours per day.

BMI Formula: [(Weight in pounds) / (Height in inches ²)] x 703 = BMI. For children, this number is then plotted on growth charts according to age and gender.

HOW BMI WORKS:

- Height: 4'9" (57 inches)
- Weight: 110 lbs
- BMI: [110 / 57²] x 703 = 23.8

For Children, plot BMI on pediatric growth charts to determine weight status

Boy, age 9 with BMI of 23.8 = overweight

Boy, age 14 with BMI of 23.8 = at risk for overweight

For a pediatric growth chart visit www.rwjf.org.

VISUAL ELEMENTS available on the video news feed:

- **INTERVIEWS:**
 - Dr. Jonathan Klein, Co-Author, *Screening for Obesity in Pediatric Primary Care: A Review of Literature*
 - Dr. David Satcher, Former U.S. Surgeon General & Director, National Center for Primary Care, Morehouse School of Medicine
 - Dr. Marc Jacobson, American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Obesity
 - Lori and Clarissa Garay, Mother and 13-year old daughter
 - Dr. Thomas Lynch, Clarissa's doctor
- **B-ROLL:** Clarissa getting measured and weighed at pediatrician's office, Mom consultation with pediatrician, Clarissa eating healthy food, photographs of Clarissa when overweight, unidentifiable overweight and obese children, BMI age-specific growth charts, video participants at work

AVAILABLE ON CNN NEWSOURCE PATHFIRE

SATELLITE COORDINATES

WHAT: BMI Screening Recommended for Early Detection of Obesity In Children
WHEN: Thursday, June 24, 2004 from 1 – 1:15pm & 4 – 4:15pm EDT
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CONTACT: Angela Vallera at 877-544-8400 (toll free)

This feed is part of the Television Health Series sponsored by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. RWJF, based in Princeton, N.J., is the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care. For information on upcoming stories about childhood obesity, please contact Angela Vallera at vallera@Homefront.tv