



Pediatric Growth Charts & Health and Nutrition Data

All parents want to be sure their children are growing up healthy. Pediatric growth charts are the tools most widely used by parents and pediatricians to track children's growth and to identify potential developmental issues. The charts are based on national estimates derived from CDC's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), the only national survey which includes interviews, standardized physical exams, and laboratory tests. CDC creates the charts by collecting standard height and weight measurements for hundreds of children annually.

Used in the United States since 1977, the charts were revised in 2000 to incorporate body mass index, in order to provide an additional tool for early identification of children and teens at risk for obesity. By using measurements taken during routine checkups, a pediatrician can plot a child's height and weight to determine how the child's growth compares with his/her peers, and to identify any potential health or nutrition concerns.

Pediatric growth charts are one of the many uses of the hundreds of health indicator data items collected in each NHANES exam. CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) has been working with state and local

governments to help them use NHANES as a model to produce health information about their specific populations. These state and local population data can be used for identifying local trends that can be compared to national data. For example, NCHS provided technical assistance and other support to New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to conduct a health and nutrition examination survey modeled on NHANES. New York is using this information to determine obesity levels and mental health status for its population. NCHS is currently working with state health officials in California and Wisconsin to provide similar support for surveys in these states.



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