

What does BMI really mean?

What Is BMI?

Body Mass Index is a calculation that uses a child's height, age, and weight to estimate how much body fat he or she has. Doctors use BMI to determine how appropriate a child's weight is for a certain height.

Calculating BMI

The best way to determine your child's BMI is to have your child's doctor do it. That way, you'll know the number is accurate and your child's doctor can discuss the result with you. If you're interested, you also can figure out your BMI by using this calculation:

BMI = (weight in pounds times 703) divided by (height in inches times itself).
Follow these steps to calculate your child's BMI:

1. Multiply your child's height in inches by his or her height in inches. For example, if your child is 39 in, $39 \times 39 = 1,521$
2. Multiply your child's weight by 703. For example, if your child weighs 35.5 lb, $35.5 \times 703 = 24,956.5$
3. Divide the answer in step 2 by the answer in step 1. In the example, divide 24,956.5 by 1,521, and the answer is 16.407955
4. The number you get is your child's BMI. Round it off to one decimal place. In the example, the child's BMI would be 16.4

After calculating your child's BMI, you can use the BMI chart for boys or the BMI chart for girls to find your child's BMI percentile according to his or her age.

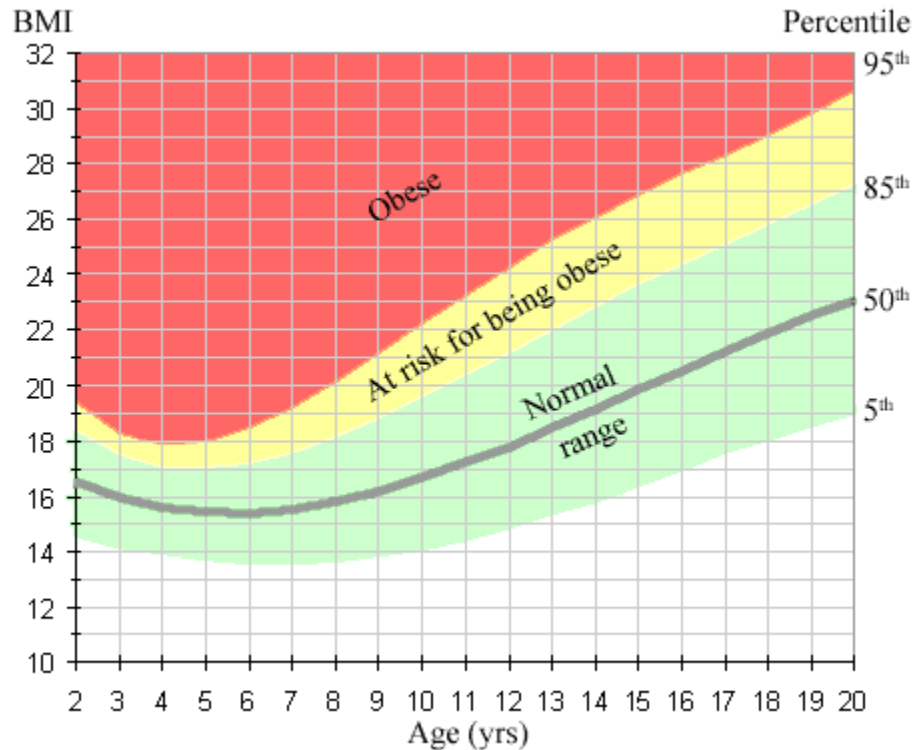
$$35.5 \times 703 = 24,956.5$$

$$39 \times 39 = 1,521$$

$$24,956.5 / 1,521 = 16.4$$

$$\text{BMI} = 16.4$$

Body mass index (BMI) for boys, ages 2 to 20

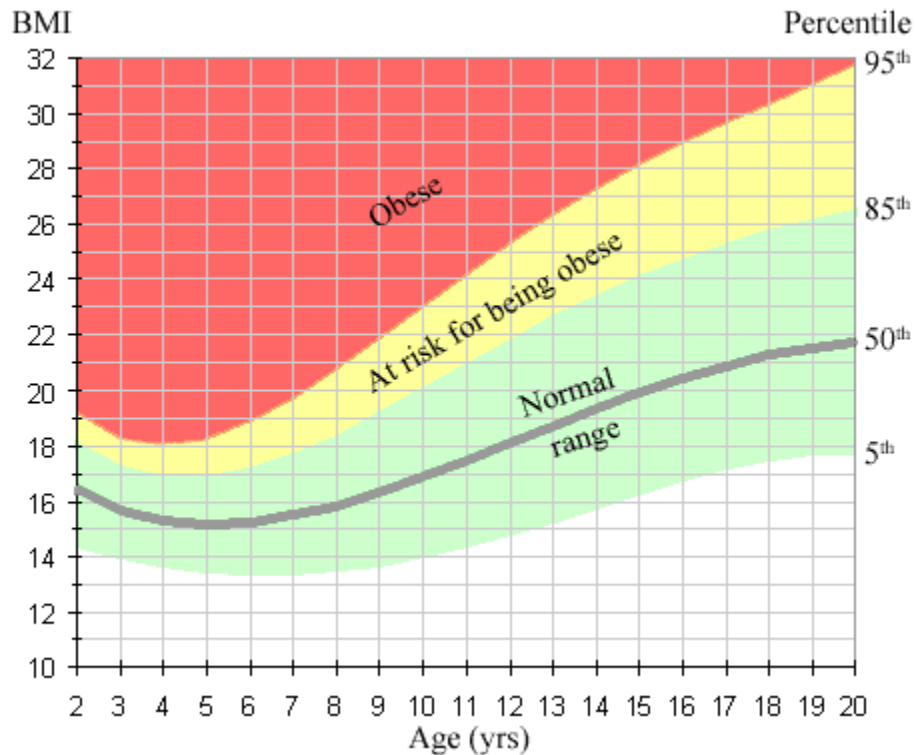


Use the chart to locate your child's BMI and age.

- Children with a BMI in the white zone are considered underweight.
- Children with a BMI in the green zone are considered to have a normal weight.
- Children with a BMI in the yellow zone are considered at risk for being obese.
- Children with a BMI in the red zone are considered obese.
- A child, who has a large change in BMI, even if he is not overweight, should be evaluated to determine the cause.

Adapted from Clinical Data on United States Children (2000). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (<http://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/>).

Body mass index (BMI) for girls, ages 2 to 20



Use the chart to locate your child's BMI and age.

- Children with a BMI in the white zone are considered underweight.
- Children with a BMI in the green zone are considered to have a normal weight.
- Children with a BMI in the yellow zone are considered at risk for being obese.
- Children with a BMI in the red zone are considered obese.
- A child, who has a large change in BMI, even if he is not overweight, should be evaluated to determine the cause.

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