

Down Syndrome Indiana™



Ask the Expert: Body Mass Index

Q: We just had my son's 4-year old check-up and his BMI is above the 95%ile.

What does BMI mean and what can we do to help him with his weight?

A: BMI stands for Body Mass Index. It is a number that shows body weight adjusted for height. Children's body proportions change as they mature, so BMI for children is gender and age-specific. Children with BMI at the 85-95 percentile are considered at risk for overweight or obesity, while children at or above the 95 percentile (heavier body proportions than 95% of kids the same age and gender) are considered overweight. Children and adults with DS are at higher risk of obesity, but there are many things you can do to help. If your child currently drinks whole or 2% milk, change to skim milk. Encourage your child to drink water when thirsty, rather than juice, soda or sweetened fruit drinks. Limit fast food – it tends to be high in fat & calories. Encourage healthy snacks, like fresh fruits and vegetables, or fat free yogurt, and limit the amount of “junk food” in the house. Model healthy eating behavior yourself. Limit TV watching and encourage opportunities for physical activity. Finally, although you may be tempted to put your little guy on a “diet” – don't do it! Offer healthy food choices at regular meals and snack times. Let him eat what he wants. Limiting portions other than dessert or intake tends to backfire and kids will often overeat later when they get the chance.

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For More information, please contact Down Syndrome Indiana at www.dsindiana.org
or call 317-925-7617.