



May 2023 Issue

# WIC Program Newsletter

## Office Hours

Monday - Thursday:  
8:30 am – 3:45 pm  
Friday: 8:00 am –  
3:15 pm

## Site Location & Dates

Currently Conducting  
Remote and In Person  
Appointments

## Breastfeeding Support Group

Please join us for  
our virtual  
breastfeeding  
support group!  
Every Monday,  
Wednesday and  
Friday at 10am and  
Wednesday at 6pm.

## CEO's WIC Program

2328 Fifth Avenue,  
Troy, NY 12180

Phone: 518-272-6159  
Website:

[www.ceoempowers.org/wic](http://www.ceoempowers.org/wic)

\* This institution is an equal  
opportunity provider.



Photo courtesy of <https://www.nwica.org/>

## How Are Overweight and Obesity Defined?

Doctors use the medical terms "overweight" or "obese" to tell if someone has a greater chance of developing weight-related health problems. Body mass index (BMI) uses height and weight measurements to estimate a person's body fat. But calculating BMI on your own can be complicated. An easier way is to use a BMI calculator. After calculating BMI and plotting the result on standard BMI charts, doctors use four categories to describe weight in kids ages 2 to 19:

- **underweight:** BMI below the 5th percentile
- **normal weight:** BMI at the 5th and less than the 85th percentile
- **overweight:** BMI at the 85th and below 95th percentiles
- **obese:** BMI at or above 95th percentile

For kids younger than 2 years old, doctors use weight-for-length charts instead of BMI to determine how a

baby's weight compares with their length. A child under 2 who falls at or above the 95th percentile is considered overweight. BMI is not a perfect measure of body fat and can be misleading in some cases. For example, a muscular person may have a high BMI without being overweight (extra muscle adds to body weight — but not fatness).

## Why Do Kids Become Overweight or Obese?

Things that can contribute to a person becoming overweight included poor diet habits, not enough exercise, genetics, or a combination of these. Lack of access to healthy food and safe places to be active is a challenge for many families. Rarely, too much weight gain may be due to an endocrine problem, genetic syndrome, or some medicines.

## Diet and Lifestyle

We often choose foods that are quick and easy to eat — from fast food to processed and prepackaged meals and snacks. Busy schedules can leave little time to make healthier meals or to squeeze in some exercise. Portion sizes, at home and away, are too large. Plus, modern life is sedentary. Kids often spend more time playing with electronic devices than actively playing outside. Kids who spend a lot of time in front of screens are more likely to be overweight.

**Sources:** Overweight and Obesity. <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/overweight-obesity.html#catweight-eating-problems>, 27 April 2023.

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Photo courtesy of <https://www.nwica.org/>

Screen time also interferes with sleep. Kids who don't get enough sleep are more likely to be overweight.

## Exercise and Physical Activity

Many kids don't get enough physical activity. Older kids and teens should get 1 hour or more of moderate to vigorous exercise every day, including aerobic and muscle- and bone-strengthening activities. Kids ages 2 to 5 years should be active at least 3 hours throughout each day.

## Genetics

Genetics can play a role in what kids weigh. Our genes help determine body type and how the body stores and burns fat. But genes alone can't explain the current obesity crisis. Because both genes and habits are passed down from one generation to the next, multiple members of a family may struggle with weight.

People in the same family tend to have similar eating patterns, sedentary behaviors, and levels of physical activity. A child's chances of being overweight increase if a parent is overweight or obese.

## What Health Problems Can Being Overweight Cause?

People with high BMI are more likely to have weight-related health problems. These include type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol — all of which used to be considered adult diseases.

## Overweight kids may also have:

- bone and joint problems
- shortness of breath that makes exercise, sports, or any physical activity harder. It also can make asthma symptoms worse or lead kids to develop asthma.
- restless sleep or breathing problems at night, such as obstructive sleep apnea
- a tendency to mature earlier. Overweight kids may be taller and more sexually mature than their peers, raising expectations that they should act as old as they look, not as old as they are.
- irregular menstrual cycles and fertility problems in adulthood
- liver and gallbladder disease

Cardiovascular risk factors (including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes) that develop in childhood can lead to heart disease and stroke in adulthood. Preventing or treating overweight and obesity in kids may help protect them from these problems as they get older. Ask a WIC nutritionist for tips on preventing overweight and obesity in your child at your next visit!