

How often should my child be weighed and measured?

If possible, have your child weighed and measured:

- within 1-2 weeks of birth
- at 1,2,4,6,9,12,18, 24 months
- between 4-6 years.

Older children and adolescents should also be measured once each year.

Why do some children grow slower or faster than others?

Many things affect the growth of children. Small changes in patterns are normal, especially during the first 2 years of life and during the teenage growth spurt. Growth spurts are part of normal growth and development. Children may be short or thin because their parents are short or thin. If children do not eat enough, growth and weight gain may slow down. They may also become more tired, cranky and have less energy and strength than before. Babies and children who eat well but still grow poorly may have health problems. Weight can get ahead of height for many reasons. If a child is overeating and doesn't get much exercise, or has a health problem, he child might gain weight very fast.

See your health care provider for more help with these types of concerns.

Do Boys & Girls Grow at Different Rates?³

- Children grow the fastest when they are babies. During preschool and the early school years, growth is gradual in both boys and girls.
- During the teenage growth spurt, boys and girls grow quickly as they move from being children to becoming adults.
- Children mature at different ages. Girls generally mature earlier than boys. When they mature, girls gain more fat tissue (breasts, thighs and hips) while boys gain more muscle tissue.
- Teenagers can be very sensitive about their changing bodies. Parents need to tell their teenagers that this process is normal. These reassuring words will have a positive influence on how teenagers feel about their bodies.

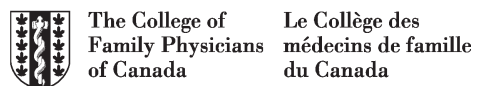
Many things affect your child's growth. Remember that children have their own pattern of growth that is natural for them. Regular weight and height measurements need to be taken to see your child's special growth pattern.

Acknowledgments: This fact sheet is endorsed by Canadian Paediatric Society, The College of Family Physicians of Canada and Community Health Nurses Association of Canada. The content of this fact sheet is based on Assessing and Monitoring Growth in Canadian Infants and Children: Which Growth Charts to Use? A Collaborative Statement from Dietitians of Canada, Canadian Paediatric Society, The College of Family Physicians of Canada and Community Health Nurses Association of Canada, 2003. To access the complete position paper or the Executive Summary link to http://www.dietitians.ca/news/highlights_positions.html.

Dietitians of Canada gratefully acknowledges authors Shefali Raja RDN (DCPNN) and Janet Schlenker RDN (DCPNN) for development of this fact sheet and DC Paediatric Nutrition Network (DCPNN) for financial support.

Copyright © 2004. Dietitians of Canada and Canadian Paediatric Society. All rights reserved. Permission to reprint for non-commercial use only.

³ Adapted with permission from Calgary Health Region – Nutrition & Active Living



COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSES ASSOCIATION OF CANADA