

Summary of USPSTF Draft Recommendation

Interventions for High Body Mass Index in Children and Adolescents

December 2023



What is this draft recommendation about?

This recommendation focuses on interventions addressing high body mass index (BMI) in children and teens. **BMI** is calculated from a child's height and weight and is plotted on a growth chart. For children and adolescents, **high BMI** is defined as at or above the 95th percentile for age and sex. **Behavioral counseling interventions** consist of 26 or more hours with a health professional and include many components such as physical activity, support for behavior change, and information about healthy eating.



What does the USPSTF recommend?

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The USPSTF recommends that clinicians provide or refer children and adolescents 6 years or older with high body mass index (BMI) (≥ 95 th percentile for age and sex) to comprehensive, intensive behavioral interventions.

So, what does that mean?

Healthcare professionals can help children and teens who have a high BMI stay healthy by providing or connecting them and their families to interventions that help them manage their weight.



Who is this draft recommendation for?

This recommendation applies to children and adolescents age 6 years and older with a high BMI, sometimes referred to as having obesity.



Why is this draft recommendation and topic important?

- Nearly 20% of children and teens in the United States have a high BMI.
- Intensive behavioral interventions are effective in helping children achieve a healthy weight, while improving quality of life.
- Rates of high BMI are highest among Hispanic/Latino, Native American/Alaskan Native, and non-Hispanic Black children and adolescents and children from lower income families.



What are the benefits?

Behavioral counseling interventions can help improve BMI and quality of life for children and teens with a high BMI.

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What are the harms?

The Task Force found that the harms of behavioral interventions are small. Harms can include minor injuries from exercising.



Where can I learn more?

[Help Your Child Stay at a Healthy Weight](#) (healthfinder.gov)

[Childhood Overweight and Obesity](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

[Pediatric Growth Charts](#) (Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention)

[Childhood Obesity](#) (National Institutes of Health)

[Obesity in Children](#) (Medline Plus)



How can I comment?

Visit the USPSTF [website](#) to read the full draft recommendation and submit a comment.



The Task Force welcomes comments on this draft recommendation.



Comments must be received between December 12, 2023, and January 16, 2024.



All comments will be considered as the Task Force finalizes the recommendation.