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Subject: Re: Childhood obesity

Posted by [Janet-DHS](#) on Tue, 02 Jan 2024 17:08:07 GMT

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Following is a response from DHS staff member, Tom Pullum:

If you google "BMI for children," you will see that there are no standards for children because the distribution of BMI varies greatly by the age of the child. That's why DHS's final reports on surveys only use BMI for adults (specifically for women). For children age 0-4 years, we recommend using the HAZ, WAZ, and WHZ. The third of these, weight-for-height, is most analogous to the BMI, because it is based only on weight and height, and is not age-specific. The cutoffs for the WHZ are at +2 and -2. Children with  $WHZ > 2$  are classified as overweight, and children with  $WHZ < -2$  are classified as wasted.

The BMI is calculated from a simple formula, weight divided by height squared (multiplied by a constant that depends on the units of measurement), but the WHZ is based on an empirical distribution, the WHO Child Growth Standards. That's why it's possible to have fixed cutoffs for the WHZ but not for the BMI.

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