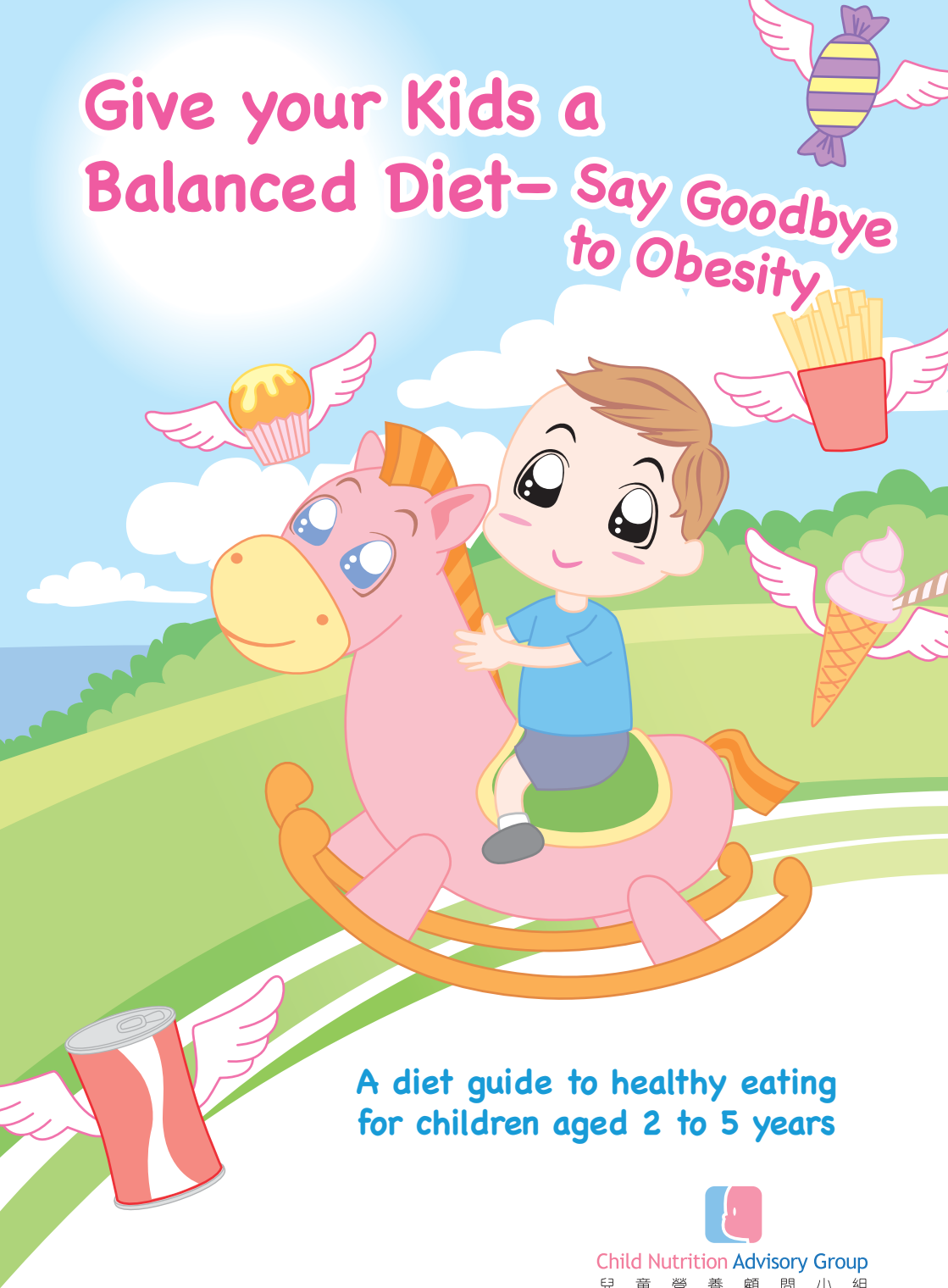


Give your Kids a Balanced Diet- Say Goodbye to Obesity



A diet guide to healthy eating
for children aged 2 to 5 years



Child Nutrition Advisory Group
兒童營養顧問小組

Childhood Obesity is Becoming More Common!

Is your child overweight or obese?

- **Rates of childhood obesity have increased** rapidly over the past two decades¹
- In 2010, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that **globally, 43 million children aged 5 years and under were overweight**,² while almost **7% of children in the world were obese**³
- Obesity is also becoming more common in Hong Kong^{4,5}
 - The proportion of overweight and obese primary year 1 students has **risen from 11.3% in the academic year 1996/1997 to 15.3% in 2010/2011**
 - **1 in 5 students were overweight or obese** in the academic year 2006/2007

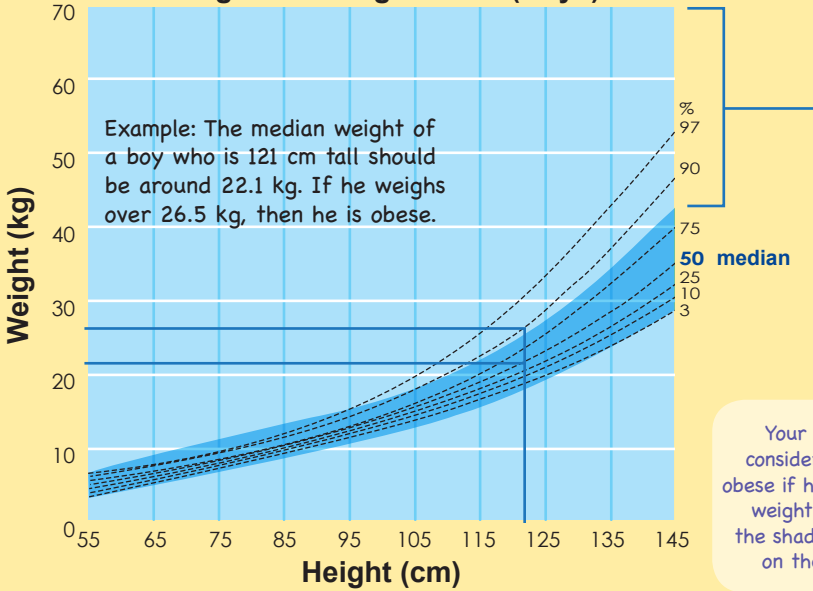
Is Your Child Obese?

- You can determine if your child is obese by calculating their median weight based on their height⁶
- If the weight of your child exceeds the median weight for their height by 1.2 times (exceeds the shaded section in the chart), then they are considered to be obese
- For example:
 - The median weight of a boy who is 121 cm should be approximately 22.1 kg (the 50% line in the chart)
 - If the boy is more than 26.5 kg ($22.1 \text{ kg} \times 1.2$), then he is obese

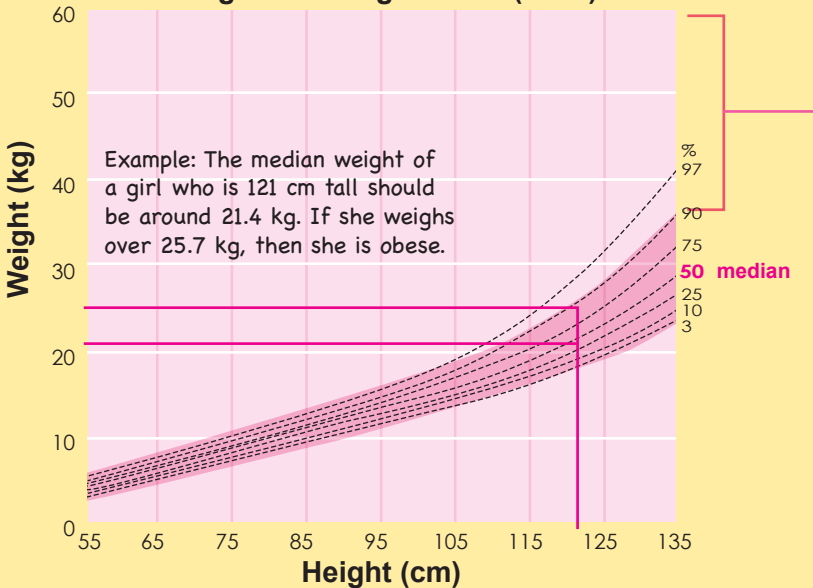


Figure. Weight and Height Chart for Children^{6,7}

Weight and Height Chart (Boys)



Weight and Height Chart (Girls)



How Does Obesity Affect Your Child?

Childhood obesity brings immediate and long-term health consequences:

- A higher likelihood of developing cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and respiratory problems⁸
- Lower self-esteem and negative body image perception^{5,8}
- A greater chance of developing obesity in adulthood⁸
- Adulthood obesity can increase the risk for cardiovascular diseases and diabetes⁸



Prevention is the Best Way to Combat Obesity

Losing weight is not easy – the best way is to prevent becoming obese from a young age.²

The Truth About the Causes of Obesity at Home

Only 10% of parents recognize that their kids are overweight or obese!⁹

In fact, many of the factors that contribute to childhood overweight and obesity are preventable:

- **Imbalanced nutrition:** Excessive nutrition, constant intake of foods high in sugar or fat, fast foods, as well as easy access to food at home⁷
- **Lifestyle habits:** A lack of exercise (eg, addiction to video games and watching television) and sleep deprivation¹⁰
- **Family environment:** Using snacks as a reward or restricting children's access to snack foods (eg, chocolate or crisps) may actually make the restricted foods more attractive, and children are more likely to binge on these snacks when given the chance^{7,11}

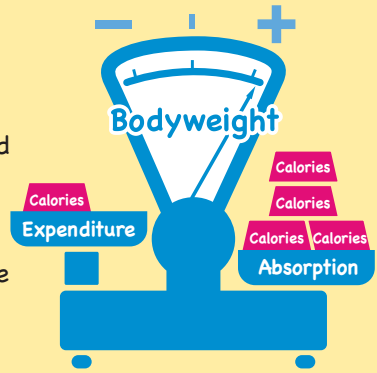




Know a Little More

Q: What are the causes of childhood overweight or obesity?

A: There are many causes that lead to childhood overweight or obesity, including an unhealthy diet and a lack of exercise. Unhealthy eating habits can increase the intake of calories, while low levels of exercise can hinder calorie expenditure. Body weight will increase as a result if there is an imbalance, where calorie intake exceeds expenditure.¹²



Reduce the Risk of Obesity

The US Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics states that proper eating habits and regular exercise can help children achieve an ideal body shape and optimal mental development.¹³

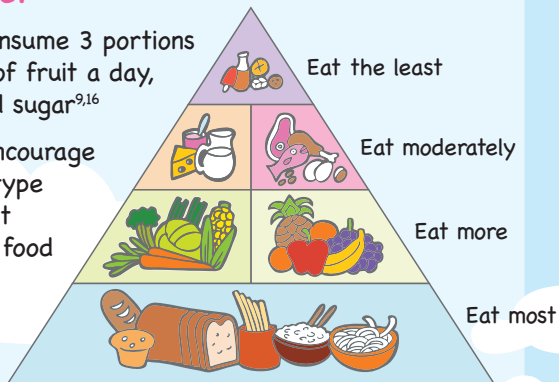
1. Healthy Tips to Live By

- **Joyful exercising:** Physical activity should be done for at least 60 minutes every day to keep your child active (eg, playing in a park)^{9,14}
- **Playing for fun:** Encourage your children to partake in more active games (eg, dancing)¹⁵
- **Stand up!:** Stand up and take a walk. Avoid being sedentary for long periods⁹
- **It's better to be active than passive:** Gradually replace passive activities (eg, watching television and playing video games) with exercise¹⁵
- **Mini elite athletes:** Encourage your kids to participate in sports or active leisure activities at school or in other groups¹⁵



2. The Road to a Healthy Diet

- **Maintain a balanced diet:** Consume 3 portions of vegetables and 2 portions of fruit a day, and limit the intake of fat and sugar^{9,16}
- **Food pyramid:** Parents can encourage their children to choose the type and amount of food they want according to principles of the food pyramid^{17,18}
- **Eat regularly:** Eat regular meals so the body can adapt well to a routine⁹
- **A relaxed eating environment:** Reduce unnecessary distractions as much as possible (eg, television)¹⁵



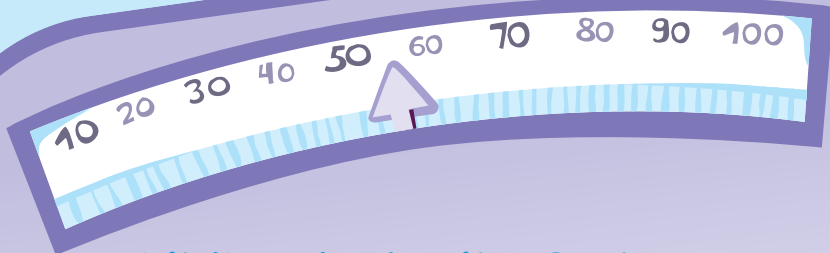
3. Family Culture

- **Happy together:** Parents should set a good example by eating the same dishes as their kids while having meals together¹⁵
- **Exercise together:** Turn exercising into a family activity¹⁵
- **Enjoy homemade food:** Reduce the frequency of eating out, especially at fast food shops that serve meals high in fat and calories⁷
- **Avoid using snacks as rewards:** Reward children with encouraging words, stickers or stationary items instead¹⁷
- **Keep fewer snacks at home:** Replace snacks at home with healthy foods like fresh fruit, dried fruit and yogurt¹⁹

Set a Good Example of Healthy Living

Your kids regard you, their parents, as their biggest idols – more so than celebrities or athletes, which is why setting a good example is crucial! As a parent, you can widen your health knowledge and harvest healthy eating habits for your children from a young age, to benefit their long term health.





Childhood Obesity Q&A

Q: Is childhood obesity common?

A: Compared to the past, obesity is an increasingly common problem among children nowadays.¹ In Hong Kong, approximately 1 in 5 children are obese.⁵

Q: Are my children obese?

A: If their weight exceeds the median weight (for their height) by 1.2 times, then they are obese.⁶ Please refer to the chart on page 2 of this leaflet to determine if your children are overweight or obese.

Q: Isn't it better if kids are chubbier?

A: Children who are obese are more prone to cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and respiratory problems, and are also at a higher risk of developing these diseases and obesity in adulthood.⁸

Q: How can I help my children lose weight at home?

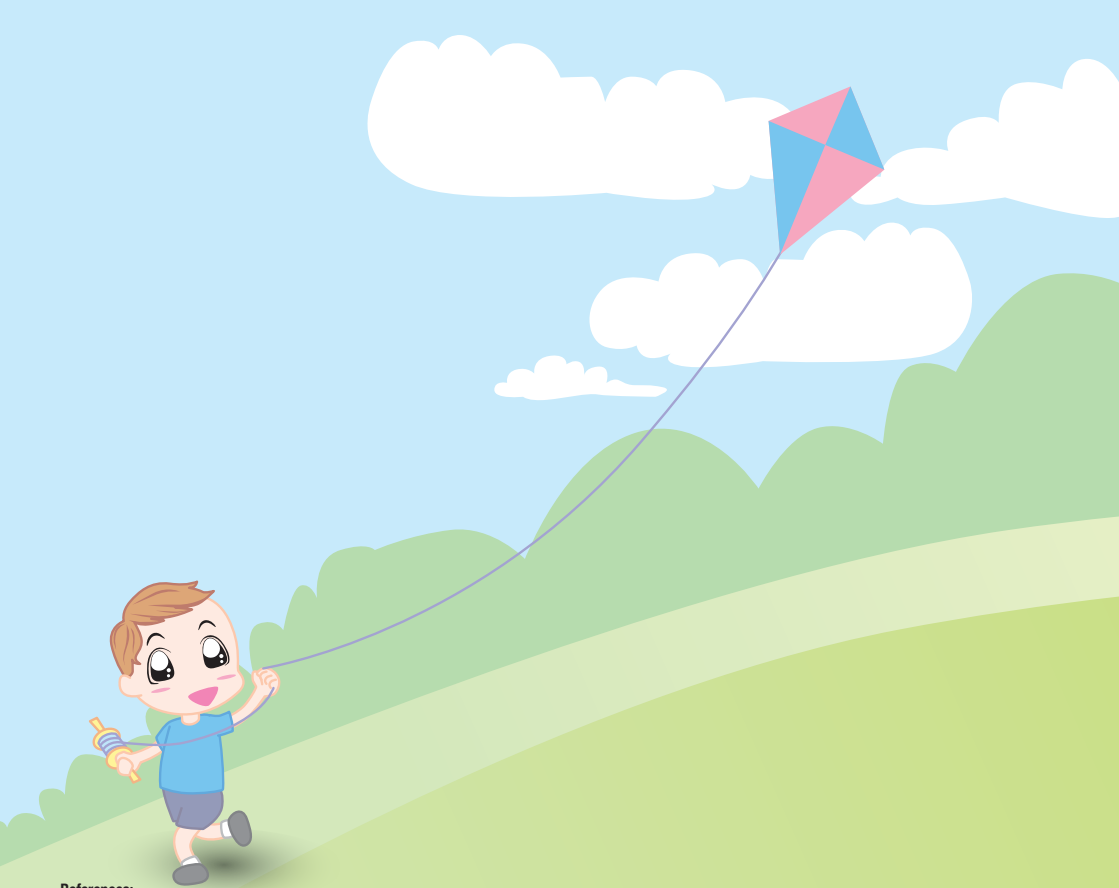
A: To avoid persistent weight gain while maintaining proper growth and weight for a growing child, regular exercise and healthy eating are instrumental.²⁰ **Do not start your children on a diet or weight loss programme without seeking professional advice.**

Q: What are some tips for preventing childhood overweight and obesity?

A: Appropriate nutrition, regular exercise and eating a balanced diet from a young age are key. In addition, family culture is equally important: parents should set good examples for their children.^{7,10,21,22}

Please consult your doctor or healthcare provider if you have any specific questions about the health of your children.





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