



## Healthy Weight



People with developmental disabilities can find it more difficult to eat healthy, be physically active, and control their weight.

Children and adults with mobility limitations and intellectual disabilities are at greatest risk for obesity, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

People with developmental disabilities are also at increased risk for developing feeding difficulties and secondary nutritional deficiencies.

Malnutrition has been reported in up to 90 percent of non-ambulatory children with cerebral palsy. Failure to assess and treat these problems can result in illness or death.

**20% of children** ages 10 to 17 with a disability are **obese** compared with 15% of children the same age without the same health care needs

### Considering a Person's Body Mass Index

**Body mass index** is a common measurement used to determine if a person is of a healthy weight, underweight, or obese. Many BMI calculators are available online.

What's next once someone knows their BMI? If a person would like support in managing their weight, they should discuss with their team possible options, such as medical monitoring, nutritional evaluations, or a diet and exercise plan.

Providers can support someone who has an interest in losing or

gaining weight by asking questions like

- How often would you like to check your progress?
- How can we add more movement and exercise into daily routines?
- Is a nutritional assessment part of the service plan?
- Is specialized equipment needed to assist with nutritional intake?

**More than 60%** of children and adults with a disability are **underweight** with a BMI less than or equal to 20

### Potential Complications

#### Overweight or obese

High blood pressure; heart problems; Type II diabetes; arthritis; stroke; some types of cancer; sleep apnea; gall bladder or bladder control problems; liver disease, hypertension; breathing disorders

#### Underweight

Increased risk of infection and disease; fatigue; bone thinning; cardiac arrhythmia; increased risk of break in skin integrity