

Bright Futures: Addressing Childhood Obesity

What is *Bright Futures*?

Bright Futures, a HRSA-supported initiative, provides health care professionals and maternal and child health programs updated recommendations for pediatric health promotion, health supervision, and anticipatory guidance for well-child visits. To ensure consistency in the quality of care, HRSA works to implement *Bright Futures* as the standard for pediatric preventive care. *Bright Futures* develops [materials and tools](#) to provide health care professionals with a common framework for well-child care, to enhance family-provider partnerships, and to create opportunities for health education. These materials and tools include:



- ***Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents:*** A “how to” manual of all-inclusive, age-specific, evidence-based recommendations and tips to enhance the quality of primary and preventive care. Includes the Periodicity Schedule, which summarizes the recommended well-child screenings/services to perform at every well-child visit.
- ***Bright Futures Tool and Resource Kit:*** Resources to implement *Bright Futures* in practice.
- **Educational materials for families.**

What does *Bright Futures* say about Childhood Obesity?

Bright Futures acknowledges that maintaining a healthy weight during childhood and adolescence is critically important for overall health and well-being. By providing a developmental and contextual approach to positive attitudes and healthy eating behaviors, *Bright Futures* provides guidance to health professionals to help identify and address childhood obesity concerns. In efforts to improve the overall health status of children, *Bright Futures* offers an overview of recommendations to help promote healthy weight, nutrition, and physical activity.

- **Obesity prevention in infancy:** While breastfeeding is the best means of preventing the short- and long-term risks of obesity, *Bright Futures* offers guidance on both breastfeeding and formula feeding.
- **Evidence-based information on maintaining a healthy weight as the child grows:** A balanced, nutritious diet and regular physical activity can help children achieve and sustain a healthy weight throughout childhood and into adolescence.

Bright Futures recommends that health professionals use well-child visits to:

- Encourage mothers to breastfeed when possible
- Discourage smoking during pregnancy
- Plot and assess BMI percentiles routinely for early recognition of overweight and obesity
- Address increasing BMI percentiles before the child reaches the 95th percentile
- Identify children and adolescents at risk of being overweight and/or obese later in life – for example, infants born to mothers with gestational diabetes
- Assess eating and physical activity, including the amount of non-homework screen time and whether the patient has a television in his or her bedroom
- Provide anticipatory guidance for nutrition and physical activity

To learn more, visit mchb.hrsa.gov/maternal-child-health-topics/child-health/bright-futures.html.