

## Growth Assessment and Monitoring during Childhood

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### Abstract

Growth is an indicator of the health and nutritional status of infants and children. Health organisations and professionals worldwide advocate monitoring the growth of children with the primary aim of identifying and preventing malnutrition and/or obesity. Growth monitoring should be part of every health care consultation for children. However, physicians during health care consultations are often so busy addressing acute health issues, that they miss the opportunity to monitor the child's growth and provide anticipatory guidance. Appropriate growth monitoring would enable health care providers to detect abnormal growth in a timely manner, as well as to reassure parents if their concerns are unfounded. To perform this effectively, physicians need to be familiar with measurement methods, use of appropriate growth charts and interpretation of results. As weight, height and growth rates may vary among children, physicians also need to understand what constitutes normal growth. This paper aims to clarify the purpose of growth monitoring and provide recommendations for physicians to assess, monitor and manage growth in infants and children in a primary care setting.

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