



COVID-19 and Childhood Obesity Complexities

With the pandemic as an additional barrier, it's important for providers to prevent childhood obesity by completing a thorough health assessment at every Texas Health Steps (THSteps) or well-child visit. According to the CDC, the prevalence of obesity in the United States was 13.4% among two to five-year-olds, 20.3% among six to 11-year-olds, and 21.2% among 12 to 19-year-olds.¹

Reference the [BCBSTX Preventive Care Guidelines \(PCGs\)](#), [Clinical Practice Guidelines \(CPGs\)](#), the [Magellan Behavioral Health Toolkit](#), and [THSteps for Medical Providers](#), [ImmTrac2](#), [Tips to Help Children Maintain a Healthy Weight](#) and other resources to help support quality of care.

Best Practices for Texas Health Steps (THSteps) and Well-Child Visits

THSteps and Weight Assessment and Counseling for Nutrition and Physical Activity for Children/Adolescents (WCC) HEDIS® compliance

- Starts at 24 months of age
- Record the child's height, weight and body mass index (BMI) and percentile
- Screen for dyslipidemia.² Labs are required starting at age nine.³ Screen every two years the child remains at risk
- Conduct telehealth visits to ensure timely care, if child can't be seen in the office

Discuss and document anticipatory guidance

- All ages
- Promote healthy behaviors (i.e. MyPlate champion)
- Limit screen time
- Exercise regularly
- Develop proper sleep
- Practice good hygiene, as suggested by age group.⁴

Physical activity - Reduces anxiety and depression³

- Assess the child's mental health for signs of anxiety or depression
- Psychological problems are link to childhood obesity⁵

Encourage shared decision making (SDM)

- Systematic review study: Most commonly cited facilitator for pediatric SDM was high-quality information tailored to the child's developmental needs and the parent's literacy needs.⁶



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¹ The CDC. Childhood Obesity Facts. Retrieved April 28/2021 from <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.htm>

²Periodicity Schedule. Retrieved January 26, 2021, from <https://www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/practice-transformation/managing-patients/Pages/Periodicity-Schedule.aspx>

³Medical Providers. Retrieved January 26, 2021, from <https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/health-services-providers/texas-health-steps/medical-providers>

⁴Tips to Help Children Maintain a Healthy Weight. (2021, January 08). Retrieved January 26, 2021, from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/children/index.html>

⁵Childhood Obesity Causes & Consequences. (2020, September 02). Retrieved January 26, 2021, from <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/causes.html>

⁶Boland, L., Graham, I. D., Légaré, F., Lewis, K., Jull, J., Shephard, A., Lawson, M. L., Davis, A., Yameogo, A., & Stacey, D. (2019). Barriers and facilitators of pediatric shared decision-making: a systematic review. *Implementation science: IS*, 14(1), 7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-018-0851-5>

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