

Family Education Sheet

Weighing and Measuring Your Child at Home



Boston Children's Hospital

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Why does my child need to be weighed and measured at home?

You may be asked to weigh and measure your child at home if you are going to have a Virtual Visit. Weights and heights help your provider understand how your child is growing.

How should I get my child ready to be weighed and measured?

For children under 2 years old:

- Take off everything your child is wearing. This includes diaper, clothes, shoes and hats. It also includes any braces they may wear, if it's safe to take them off.

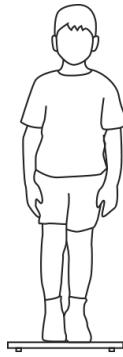
For children over 2 years old:

- Take off any heavy clothing your child is wearing. This includes jackets, sweatshirts or sweaters. It's OK to weigh your child wearing a light layer of clothing.

How should I weigh my child?

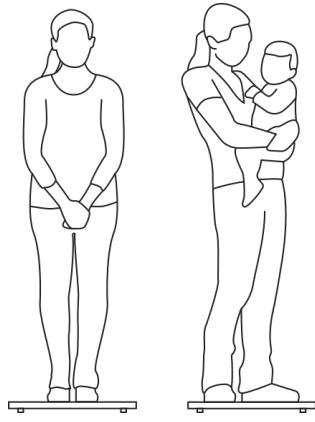
If your child is able to stand on a scale without help:

- Have your child stand on the scale alone. Keep your child from touching nearby furniture or walls.
- Weigh your child at the same time every day if you are weighing your child daily. For example: Weigh your child first thing in the morning.



For infants and children who cannot stand on their own:

- First: Weigh yourself **alone** on the scale and write down your weight. [Weight #1: _____]
- Next: Pick up your child and stand on the scale while holding your child. Write down this weight. [Weight #2: _____]
- Last: Subtract the first weight (you alone) from the second weight (you and your child together). This is an estimate of your child's weight.

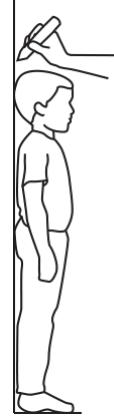


$$[\text{Weight #2: } \underline{\hspace{2cm}} - \text{Weight #1: } \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \boxed{\quad}]$$

How should I measure length or height for my child?

If your child is able to stand on their own:

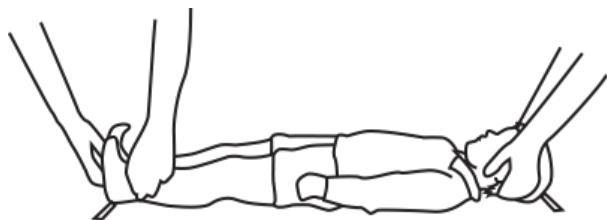
- Have your child stand with their head, back and heels touching the wall.
 - Use a pencil or a piece of tape to mark a spot on the wall at the top of your child's head.
 - Measure from the floor to the mark or tape. Write down this number as your child's height.



If your child is not able to stand on their own:

- Lay your child on a flat surface, like a hardwood floor, a table or a countertop. Position them as straight as possible.
- Place a piece of tape at the top of their head and another at their heels.
- Measure between the pieces of tape. Write down this number as your child's length.

Note: Be sure your child is secure and will not roll off of high surfaces. It's best to measure with 2 people.



What is mid-upper arm circumference?

A mid-upper arm circumference measures around the upper arm between the tip of the shoulder and the elbow. This measurement can help understand your child's nutritional status when their weights or heights are not reliable. Your provider may ask you to measure a mid-upper arm circumference for your child.

How do I measure a mid-upper arm circumference?

You will need:

- A flexible (bendable) measuring tape that will wrap around your child's arm. You can use a string if you do not have a flexible measuring tape.
- A washable marker or pen to mark the mid-point on your child's arm.

Remove clothing from your child's arm and follow these steps:

1. Find the midpoint of the upper arm:

- Bend the right arm at the elbow to 90° angle.
- Face the palm upward.
- Measure the upper arm length from the top of the shoulder to the tip of the elbow. The measuring tape or string should go down the **side** of the arm.
- Divide the number by 2 and mark the midpoint on your child's arm.

Note: If you use a string, you will need to measure the string against a ruler or measuring tape to get the measurement. Make a mark on the string at the mid-point. Use this to show where to mark the mid-point on the arm.

2. Measure arm circumference:

For children who can stand up straight:

- Position your child standing straight up with their weight even on both feet.

For children in a wheelchair:

- The arm should hang freely without touching the arms of the wheelchair.

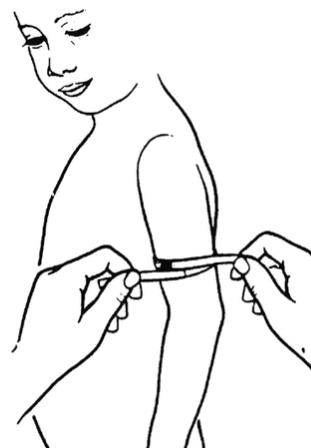
For infants:

- Set infants up in an upright position. The infant may be held by a parent/caregiver.

Follow these next steps for all children:

- Let the arm hang down at side in relaxed position.
- Shake the arm gently to make sure that it is relaxed.
- Place the tape gently around the arm at the mid-point. The tape should not be loose. It should not be squeezing the arm.
- Write down the number in centimeters. This is the mid-upper arm circumference.

Note: It may be helpful to measure 2-3 times to be sure you get close to the same number each time.



Where do I call for information?

- If you would like to schedule an appointment with a registered dietitian, please contact the Center for Nutrition at 617-355-4677 or via email at nutritiondept@childrens.harvard.edu.

This Family Education Sheet is available in Arabic and Spanish.