



NIHCM
FOUNDATION

WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH UPDATE

September 30, 2004

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1. [NIHCM Foundation research brief, "Obesity in Young Children: Impact and Intervention"](#)

In August, NIHCM Foundation released its latest publication on childhood obesity that highlights the effect of overweight on young children in relation to school performance, behavior, and physical activity. "Obesity in Young Children: Impact and Intervention" summarizes three peer-reviewed studies conducted by RAND and other initiatives addressing childhood overweight. Major findings include:

- Just one additional hour per week of PE can significantly reduce overweight in young girls;
- Overweight girls at the beginning of kindergarten are significantly more likely to be identified by both parents and teachers as having behavior problems; and

- Overweight children tend to score lower on both reading and math standardized tests at the beginning of kindergarten, and their lower scores track into 1st grade.

Visit <http://www.nihcm.org/OYCbrief.pdf> to view the brief.

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2. [New Research and Tools on BMI Assessment for Childhood Overweight](#)

- A new research report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to assess obesity screening using BMI and found, among other things, that primary care providers routinely use "clinical impression" to assess obesity among children rather than BMI measures. "Screening for Obesity in Pediatric Primary Care: A Review of the Literature" issues recommendations to promote adoption of BMI as the primary tool for obesity assessment. Visit: http://www.rwjf.org/news/special/bmiChildObesity_2.jhtml.
- Through a grant from Horizon Healthcare, Shape Up America! has developed an online Pediatric BMI Assessment tool for ease of BMI calculation and elimination of misclassification of childhood overweight. The interactive tool is designed for healthcare professionals to calculate BMI and plot BMI percentile on the CDC growth charts. See the Childhood Obesity Assessment Calculator for details at <http://www.shapeup.org/oap/entry.php>.

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3. [New IOM Report Calls for National Effort on Childhood Obesity](#)

On September 30, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) issued a report calling for a national effort to combat childhood obesity. "Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance" promotes a multi-pronged approach by schools, families, communities and government to reverse the obesity epidemic among American children. The Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth recommended steps that aim to improve opportunities for children to engage in physical activity and eat a healthy diet. For additional information go to <http://www.iom.edu/project.asp?id=5867>.

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4. [Strategic Plan for NIH Obesity Research](#)

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) released the final version of its "Strategic Plan for NIH Obesity Research," a guide for coordinating obesity research activities across NIH and developing new research priorities. The Strategic Plan's goals include a call for intensified research on special populations who are at high risk for obesity, particularly children. For more information visit: <http://www.obesityresearch.nih.gov/>.

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5. [Health Affairs Special Issue on Child Health](#)

The September/October issue of Health Affairs, the leading journal on health care policy, focuses on children's health. "Child Health: A Progress Report" provides a collection of peer-reviewed articles on the status of children and the policies and practices that shape their lives, including health coverage, spending and care. To view the issue visit: <http://www.healthaffairs.org/>.

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6. [New HHS Report Maps Women's Health in the United States](#)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Women's Health has produced a collection of statistical data on women's health in each of the states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. "The Women's Health and Mortality Chartbook" provides current state data on 27 featured health indicators highlighting some key women's health-related issues measured at the state level. To view the chartbook go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/dataawh/statab/chartbook.htm>.

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The Women's and Children's Health Update is produced by NIHCM Foundation under its cooperative agreement (5U93MC00143) with the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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