

Healthy weight in childhood

Key messages

June 2016



Redefinition of Child Health Target

The Ministry of Health has amended and clarified its Child Health Target, this is being referred to as Raising Healthy Children, which is effective from 1 July 2016. The denominator will be worked out based on the number of children who had a B4SC and were identified as obese (BMI > 98th percentile). The numerator will be the number of children who had a B4SC and were identified as obese (BMI > 98th percentile) and were referred from the B4SC to a registered health professional, or were already under care of a service or the parent/caregiver declined the referral. The two key changes to the current B4SC check reporting are the acknowledgement of referral which has been reduced from 60 days to 30 days, and changes to what will be counted as a referral will reflect what is intended by the target. From 1 July, only referrals to a registered health professional working in a primary health care or community setting will be accepted as a referral for the purposes of the health target. The referral is to assess and manage any clinical concerns associated with obesity, encourage the parents to take some action, and routinely monitor the child's growth. The new Raising Healthy Kids health target focuses on intervening in the early stages of life to ensure positive, sustained effects on health. Referrals from the B4SC was chosen for the target as the B4SC has a robust data set; provides a lens on the effectiveness of earlier interventions; and provides a point for reference moving forward.

Regionalising the eGrowth chart solution

To document children's height and weight information in one electronic document, and make it easier for clinicians to use agreed height and weight cut-offs for children, South Island Paediatricians have developed an electronic 'eGrowth chart' for South Island DHBs, based on WHO growth standards. This will provide a single place for an electronic view of key patient information, and access to growth records of children and babies moving between DHBs. Initially, this eGrowth chart will be used in secondary care, but will be viewable from primary care through HealthOne. In the future it is planned to share growth data to and from primary care systems. Southern DHB have been developing this e-solution for 10 years. The Information Services Service Level Alliance are now responsible for the regionalisation of eGrowth charts into Nelson Marlborough DHB, South Canterbury DHB, West Coast DHB and Canterbury DHB through the regional clinical portal Health Connect South.

The SI Child Health Service Level Alliance coordinated approach

To progress the aim of 'healthy weight for all' South Island children, the South Island Child Health Service Level Alliance has agreed a five-point healthy weight in childhood plan. The plan is overseen by South Island Healthy Weight in Childhood Clinical Advisory Group (SICAG). The SICAG is working on the projects below.

Aligning resources

A key component of the plan is to make available consistent resource options on healthy childhood weight for South Island DHBs. One new option which will become available to DHBs this year is BeSmarter, a resource to start conversations about health and develop goal-setting. It is designed to be used by a range of health professionals and to be parent/child friendly. It was developed by the Bodywise Team, Waikato District Health Board and Sport Waikato and printed for distribution in mid-2015. It is used by staff across the health sector in Waikato, including paediatricians, nurses, dietitians, dentists, GPs and practice nurses, and B4SC staff. There continues to be interest in the use of BeSmarter throughout the country and many services have already implemented it. Another resource, the B4SC 4-year-old weight ruler, was developed by Prof Barry Taylor (Paediatrician, and Chair of the SICAG) for clinicians to help families in a friendly and engaging way. This is also available to South Island DHBs and health sector staff.

Triple P Healthy Lifestyle Group update

To add to treatment options of existing child obesity, South Island DHBs are planning a New Zealand-first trial of the Triple P Healthy Lifestyle Group intervention. This is an intervention which can be delivered to 10 parents/whānau at a time. Currently, the DHBs are considering numbers of facilitators they will put forward for facilitator training. The final numbers of facilitators for each region have not been established.

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