

# Could there be a better way to estimate body fat levels in children, adolescents?

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Reducing childhood obesity is an international effort and central to that effort is being able to accurately determine which children and adolescents are overweight. Body mass index (BMI) is used worldwide to

screen for obesity, but since BMI does not work as well in children, BMI z scores are used instead to classify children and adolescents as normal weight, overweight or obese based on their BMI percentile.

Is there a better or more accurate screening tool to use for children and adolescents?

A new article published by *JAMA Pediatrics* tested other body fat indices, including the tri-ponderal mass index, or TMI, which is mass divided by height cubed.

The article by Courtney M. Peterson, Ph.D., of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and coauthors suggests it may be worth considering replacing BMI z scores with TMI to screen for obesity and overweight status in children and adolescents.

**More information:** *JAMA Pediatrics* (2017). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2017.0460](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2017.0460)

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