The high prevalence of overweight and obesity in Ventura County children and teens continues to be a major public health concern, especially for those in low-income and minority groups. In 2009, over 34% of Ventura County children, ages 2 to under 5 years, who received CHDP health assessments were overweight or obese. The same year, more than 43% of Ventura County children and adolescents, ages 5 to under 20 years, receiving these screening exams were overweight or obese. As Body Mass Index-for-age percentile increases into the overweight or obese range so do the risks for:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Elevated lipid levels
- Asthma
- Sleep apnea
- Orthopedic problems

The associated health consequences of these conditions may be immediate or may manifest later in life. Over the last 10 years, the United States has made little progress towards reducing the prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity.

The Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS) of the Centers for Disease Control is the only source of nationally compiled obesity surveillance data for preschool-aged children participating in federally funded health and nutrition programs. In California, the data are submitted exclusively from CHDP health screening exams. In addition, California is the only state that submits data for older children and teens, providing valuable information about overweight and obesity in school-aged children and adolescents participating in federally funded programs. Data tables and reports are published for the nation, state or tribal group, and by county or reporting area.

**Did you know?**
- In 2009, more than 1 in 3 Ventura County preschoolers, ages 2 to < 5, who received CHDP health assessments were overweight or obese.
- Also, more than 2 in 5 Ventura County children and teens, ages 5 to < 20, receiving these screening exams in 2009 were overweight or obese.

**What’s the difference between overweight and obesity?**

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a reliable indicator of body fatness for most children and teens. Growth percentiles are used to evaluate the size and growth patterns in individual children. The percentile indicates the relative position of the child’s BMI number among children of the same sex and age. Risk for associated health conditions rises as BMI-for-age percentile increases to the levels described as “overweight” and “obesity”. Weight status categories and the corresponding percentiles for children and teens are shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight Category</th>
<th>Body Mass Index-for-age Percentile Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underweight</td>
<td>&lt; 5th percentile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy weight</td>
<td>5th - 84th percentiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>85th - 94th percentiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obese</td>
<td>≥ 95th percentile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2009 CHDP data highlights ongoing concerns**

![Body Mass Index-for-Age Distribution in Low-income Children and Teens Receiving CHDP Health Screening Exams in Ventura County in 2009](chart.png)
Clinical practices promote fitness and healthy weight

Incorporate the following 5 points to your health assessments and guidance:

**B** Encourage, teach, and support breastfeeding

**B** Use the Body Mass Index to screen for overweight and obesity

**2** Minimize sedentary activities Fewer than 2 hours of screen time

**1** Encourage active play More than 1 hour of physical activity

**0** Reduce intake of sugary drinks 0 sugar sweetened beverages

Share resources • Make referrals

- Advocates for a Lifestyle of Exercise and Nutrition in Ventura County (A Lean VC) Countywide coalition to foster healthy eating and regular exercise in the community. For information and meeting dates, email JoAnn.Torres@ventura.org.
- Chronic Disease Prevention and Early Detection Program, Calendar of Events Email Sara.Rivera@ventura.org to request a subscription to the monthly calendar.
- Si Se Puede Youth Wellness Clinic (multidisciplinary weight management & prevention program) Collaboration by Santa Paula Hospital and Santa Paula West. Call (805) 921-1600.