



'Is my child growing well?' **Questions and answers for parents**

All children grow at different rates. There is a wide range of normal growth patterns. Your child's overall growth pattern is unique for him / her; other children at the same age are likely to be different height and weights. Most importantly your child's growth usually follows a pattern that is right for your child.

Why should I have my child's growth monitored?

The way your child grows can reassure that they are healthy. Growing too fast or too slowly can be a sign of concern about health or nutrition. From birth until school-age, your child's weight and length / height should be measured at their child health checks or immunisation to see how they are growing. Babies under 1 should also have the size of their head measured (head circumference).

How often should my child be weighed and measured?

Your child should be weighed and measured at their child health check visits and / or when they are unwell. Child health checks occur more frequently in the first 12 months, but continue through the early years. Weighing and measuring once a year is recommended for children over 2 years.

How is my child's growth checked?

A growth chart is a type of graph used to track your child's growth pattern. Each time your child is measured, the new weight and length / height measurements are marked on the growth chart.

The chart helps show if your child is growing in a healthy way. Many of the personal child health records have growth charts. Growth charts of your child are also kept by child health clinics and your local doctor. There are different charts for boys and girls; and for younger children and older children.

Which growth chart should be used to assess my child's growth?

The World Health Organization (WHO) growth charts are the recommended charts for monitoring children's growth in Australia from birth until they reach 2 years of age. These charts are based on the growth of healthy, breastfed babies measured over time in 6 countries. In 2012, all Australian States and Territories agreed to adopt the WHO Growth charts for Australian children aged 0 to 2 years. The Northern Territory has adopted the WHO charts for 2-18 year olds and WA has adopted the WHO charts for children up to 5 years. The Centers for Disease Control (US) are used in other jurisdictions for children and adolescents aged 2-18 years.

How do I know if my child is growing well?

Many things affect a child's growth including their food intake and physical activity, overall health, genetics and parent's heights.

If your child is growing well, his / her weight and length / height usually track along the same growth lines over time.

Remember all children have a pattern of growth that is individual for them. Regular weight and length / height measurements over time will show your child's individual growth pattern.

Talk to your health care provider if you have concerns about your child's growth.

Where should my child be on the growth chart?

Growth charts show a wide range of normal growing patterns for children at different ages. Three percent of healthy children at any age grow below the bottom of the growth chart, and



3% of healthy children grow above the top of the growth chart. Half of all children grow above the middle (50th percentile line) and half grow below this line. Most children usually grow along their own growth curve; sometimes this is on one of the curves of the chart, but more often it is between two of the curves on the chart. Your child's weight usually tracks somewhere close to where their height is tracking on the chart.

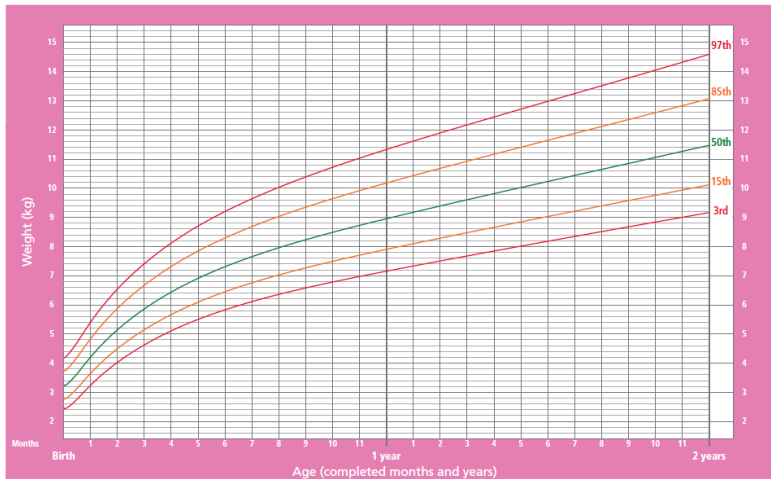
Key points about your child's growth and growth charts:

- Growth is one of the signs of general health and development
- Growth patterns are different for each individual child
- Growth may reflect family growth patterns.
- Growth patterns over time are more important than one single measurement.

The following charts are examples of the WHO weight for age growth charts for girls and boys aged 0 – 2 years.

Weight-for-age GIRLS

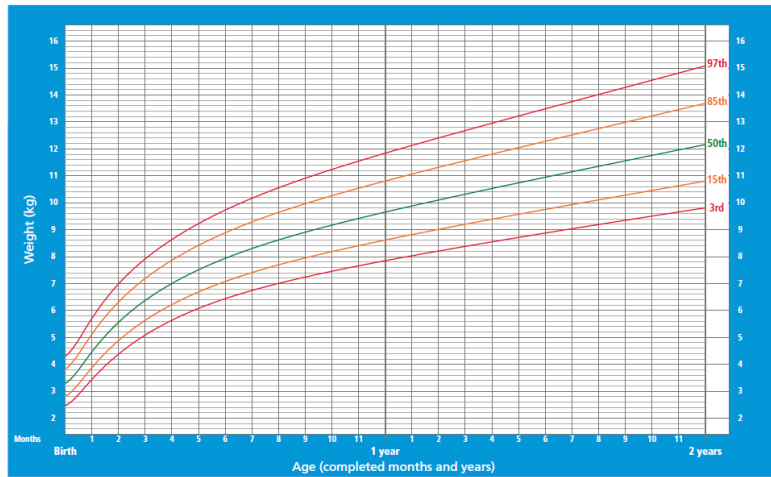
Birth to 2 years (percentiles)



WHO Child Growth Standards

Weight-for-age BOYS

Birth to 2 years (percentiles)



WHO Child Growth Standards