



# Growth is an important indicator of a child's health.

A Parent's Guide to Growth



# It's more than height, it's health.

Did you know your child's growth tells a story? It's about more than height—it may be an important sign of their overall health and physical development.

That's why it's critical to know if your child's growth rate is what it should be, at any age. Asking your child's doctor to measure your child at each visit and to plot those measurements on a growth chart are important ways to track if your child is growing normally.

If your child is not growing as he or she should, it could be the first sign of a possible medical condition. That's why regular checkups are so important—the sooner your child's doctor knows what the problem is, the sooner they can start working on it.

If you are worried that your child may be growing slower than their classmates or siblings, this pamphlet can give you helpful information so you can have an informed talk with your child's doctor.

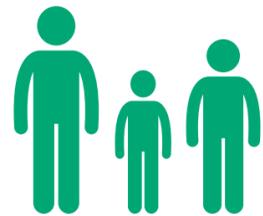
# Watch for the signs

Take a look at the checklist below. If you answer 'yes' to one of the questions, ask your child's doctor to look at your child's growth specifically.

Have you noticed your child is:



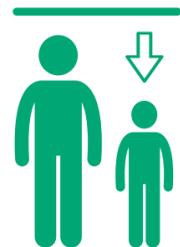
Wearing out clothes and shoes before outgrowing them?



Much shorter than peers or classmates?



Mistaken for being much younger? Teased due to height?



Shorter than you or your child's siblings were at the same age?



# What could poor growth mean?

In some children, poor growth might not be a cause for concern—but in others, it may be associated with a serious health problem.

These serious health problems that can be associated with poor growth could affect your child's:



Heart



Learning  
development



Eyesight



Hearing



Respiratory  
health



Bone  
health



Kidney  
development



Immune  
system



Body  
composition

Talk to your child's doctor the moment you suspect there may be something wrong with the way your child is growing.



# Keep growing!

## Working with your child's doctor

Regular measuring and plotting on a growth chart is key to identifying if your child has a growth issue. You should make sure that your child is measured and plotted by their doctor regularly. If the doctor thinks there might be a problem, your child might be measured more often (eg, every 6 months) for the next year to confirm if there is an issue.

If there is a problem with your child's growth, their doctor may run some tests to find out what's causing the problem. At this point you should discuss with your child's doctor if there may be a medical issue that could require seeing a specialist.

Visit [MoreThanHeight.com](https://www.morethanheight.com) to download a guide for having further conversations with your child's doctor.

### Questions to ask your child's doctor:

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- ❑ Ask your child's doctor to explain the measurements that have been taken, and if these measurements suggest a problem with your child's growth.
- ❑ Make sure to ask what percentile your child's measurements fall into, and also your child's growth velocity.
- ❑ If your child's doctor says there is a problem, ask if your child should see a specialist.

# Referral to a specialist

## What to expect when your child is referred

Depending on the possible cause behind your child's growth problem, your child's doctor may want to refer him or her to a specialist. Visiting a specialist is not a cause for alarm—but since your child only has a limited time to grow, you should follow up as soon as possible. Also, keep in mind that it may take some time to secure an appointment, so you may need to plan ahead.

The specialist may then carry out certain tests to find out what the problem is and make an official diagnosis.

A specialist may:

- Perform a physical examination
- Take a medical history of the child and parents
- Order a bone age X-ray
- Order genetic testing
- Order blood testing
- Recommend additional testing

All of this takes time—so regular measuring, plotting, and referral to a specialist are very important to ensure any issue with your child's growth is identified as soon as possible.

**When your child is diagnosed by a specialist, it is important that you understand as much about your child's diagnosis as possible. Here are some practical questions you may want to ask the doctor.**

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- ❑ What has my child been diagnosed with?
- ❑ How long will my child have this condition?
- ❑ What will the impact of this condition be on my child's life?
- ❑ What can I do as a parent to manage my child's condition?
- ❑ Will my child need to have treatment and what will the treatment involve?

# Where to go for support

You're not alone! Multiple sources are available to help you find the support you need. Here are a few of organizations that may be able to offer additional support and advice.

**The National Institutes of Health  
Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute  
of Child Health and Human Development**  
[www.nichd.nih.gov](http://www.nichd.nih.gov)

**The MAGIC Foundation®**  
[www.magicfoundation.org](http://www.magicfoundation.org)

**American Academy of Pediatrics**  
[www.Healthychildren.org](http://www.Healthychildren.org)

Learn more about your child's growth at  
**[MoreThanHeight.com](http://MoreThanHeight.com)**