In 2010, the Torrance Unified School District partnered with Torrance Memorial Medical Center Healthy Ever After Kids program to reduce childhood obesity in our schools. Although obesity is preventable it has become a major health problem and often begins in early childhood and adolescence. Children who are overweight or at-risk are more likely to become overweight or obese adults.

Being overweight or obese increases the risk of many diseases and serious health conditions that will affect quality of life now and in the future. These include:

* Type 2 diabetes High Blood Pressure Osteoarthritis
* Heart disease Gall bladder disease Stroke
* Some cancers

Additionally, overweight, obese and underweight children may face psychological and social challenges, like low self-esteem. Obese adolescents with low self-esteem are more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as smoking and drinking alcohol.

**BMI Assessment**

BMI is a screening tool for overweight and obesity. It is calculated using a ratio of weight to height, then plotted on the BMI-for-age growth chart and compared to other children of the same sex and age. Regular annual BMI assessments can be helpful in determining if your child is growing and developing in a healthy way

**Please keep in mind that while BMI is a reliable indicator of body fat for most children and teens, BMI is not a diagnostic tool and children who fall into a high BMI percentile are not necessarily overweight or obese. Like all screening tools, it may yield false positives and false negatives**

This year we will not be measuring students on campus. If you would like to know your child’s BMI, you can calculate those results by visiting the Center of Disease Control and Prevention website: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/bmi/calculator.html>. This website provides more information regarding the results as well.

Healthy Ever After Kids encourages all parents to discuss their results with a health care provider to review the results and determine further evaluation as needed. If you do not have a primary care provider, a TMMC healthcare provider will be happy to meet with you, free of charge, for further assessment and help to provide resources as needed to manage your child’s eating and activity habits. Please contact Helaine Lopes at Helaine.lopes@tmmc.com if you have any questions and/or would like to schedule an appointment.