



UK NSC obesity screening in children recommendation

Following a review of the evidence against strict criteria, the UK NSC does not currently recommend introducing a national screening programme for obesity screening in children.

The term obese describes a person who's very overweight, with a lot of body fat. It can cause serious health problems such as heart disease and diabetes.

Obese children may become obese adults and develop these health problems. Screening children for obesity would identify those who are obese. The main purpose of this would be to help them manage their BMI in order to prevent health problems in later life.

Key findings supporting the UK NSC recommendation

The UK NSC looked at research on whether screening for obesity in children under 5 and between 7 and 11 years of age improves health in the long term.

Interventions are available for overweight and obese children. These usually aim to increase physical activity and change diet. Sometimes they include parents as well as children. These have resulted in small reductions in weight over a short period of time. But it is not clear if the weight reductions would continue over a longer period of time without ongoing support.

The studies did not look at children found through screening. This is important as children found in this way might respond in a different way to the offer of these interventions.

This is the main reason why the UK NSC does not recommend screening for obesity in childhood.

The UK NSC regularly reviews its recommendations on screening for different conditions in the light of new research evidence becoming available.

To find out more about the UK NSC's obesity screening in children recommendation, please visit:

<https://legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/obesity>

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) advises ministers and the NHS in the 4 UK countries about all aspects of screening and supports implementation of screening programmes.

Find out more about the UK National Screening Committee at www.gov.uk/uknsc. The UK NSC evidence review process is described at www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nsc-evidence-review-process and a list of all UK NSC recommendations can be found at legacy.screening.nhs.uk/recommendations

The UK NSC secretariat is hosted by Public Health England (www.gov.uk/phe).