

WHO to update growth charts

April 25 2006



New World Health Organization guidelines for measuring infant growth rate will use data that reflects an increase in the number of breast-fed infants.

The old charts, designed 20-years-ago, use calculations based on the growth rate of formula-fed infants.

Infants fed formula from a bottle put on weight more quickly than those that are breast-fed, meaning breast-fed children could be shown as underweight, the BBC reported.

The new charts will be based on data from 8,000 children in six different countries. The infants were raised in environments where breastfeeding, good diets and preventative medical care are prevalent.

Current charts suggest a healthy one-year-old weighs between 22.5 and 28.5 pounds, when in fact the true healthy weight is 21 to 26 pounds.

The WHO recommends that mothers breast-feed their children, citing studies that link breast milk to a lower risk of obesity later in life and lower blood pressure.

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