

Today is International Children's Growth Awareness Day

Today, 15 September 2015, is International Children's Growth Awareness Day, considered important, as poor growth can signal underlying health problems but is not something that is routinely monitored throughout childhood.



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Often missed by parents and healthcare professionals, health problems that impact growth can have serious consequences for children and, if left unmanaged, can place a significant physical and emotional burden on a child and the family. Early identification, appropriate referral and diagnosis provide the best chance of achieving an ideal health outcome.

Routine monitoring essential

Global pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk, in association with medical experts and patient groups, is calling for improved routine monitoring and plotting of child growth as part of International Children's Growth Awareness Day, to encourage earlier diagnosis of potential underlying health conditions in children.

The campaign is part of an awareness-raising initiative by patient advocacy groups such as the International Coalition of Organizations Supporting Endocrine Patients (ICOSEP), Paediatrics Adolescent Endocrinology and Diabetes Society-South Africa (PEADS-SA) and leading physicians, and is supported by Novo Nordisk.

International Children's Growth Awareness Day encourages parents to continue regular check-ups, including measuring and plotting their child's growth throughout childhood and seeking medical advice if their child's growth shows signs of declining.

While some growth-related health conditions are diagnosed at birth, in other cases a diagnosis is often not made until a

parent, paediatrician or teacher notices that a child is growing more slowly than their peers are. Most children, who may appear small, are following a normal growth pattern and are likely to be fit and healthy. However, for any child whose growth is declining, a healthcare professional should be consulted to rule out an underlying health problem.

Parents and other caregivers have an important role in recognising changes in growth patterns and, by working together with healthcare professionals, have the opportunity to ensure that children affected by growth disorders are given the best possible chance of improved health outcomes.

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