

YOUR CHILD'S BODY IMAGE: WHAT'S A PARENT TO DO?

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WHAT IS BODY IMAGE?

- ▶ Body image is the dynamic perception of one's body— how it looks, feels, and moves. It is shaped by perception, emotions, physical sensations, and is not static, but can change in relation to mood, physical experience, and environment.

THE REALITY...

- ▶ 50-88% of adolescent girls feel negatively about their body shape or size.
- ▶ 49% of teenage girls say they know someone with an eating disorder.
- ▶ Only 33% of girls say they are at the “right weight for their body”, while 58% want to lose weight. Just 9% want to gain weight.
- ▶ Females are much more likely than males to think their current size is too large (66% vs. 21%).
- ▶ Over one-third of males think their current size is too small, while only 10% of women consider their size too small.

CONTINUED

- ▶ *85% of young women worry “a lot” about how they look and twice as many males as females say they are satisfied with their appearance.*
- ▶ *A report by the American Association of University Women indicated that for girls, “the way I look” is the most important indicator of self-worth, while for boys, self-worth is based on abilities, rather than looks.*

BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES

- ▶ **Approximately 30% of boys and 55% girls report using unhealthy weight control methods such as vomiting, laxatives, diet pills, cigarette smoking, and diuretics in effort to lose weight.**
- ▶ **At 8 years-old, girls believe that weight control is strongly associated with self-worth and view dieting as a means of improving self-worth.**
- ▶ **Dieting can lead to unhealthy weight control behaviors, disordered eating, and ultimately eating disorders.**
- ▶ **Low self-esteem and low self-worth, can severely limit the potential for youth to succeed**
- ▶ **Teasing related to weight and shape is implicated as contributing to disordered eating.**

SO...WHAT'S A PARENT TO DO??

LESSON I

ACCEPT YOUR CHILD'S GENETIC PREDISPOSITION

- ▶ You may force the body into sizes and shapes that *you* prefer, but you can't beat Mother Nature....without a tremendous cost

LESSON 2

UNDERSTAND THAT ALL BODIES CHANGE DEVELOPMENTALLY IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMPLY NOT IN YOUR CONTROL

- ▶ Healthy lifestyle choices can be **influential**...but one can not **CONTROL** the changes

PUBERTY

- ▶ Going through puberty can amplify body image concerns.
- ▶ Puberty for boys brings characteristics typically admired by society— height, speed, broadness, and strength.
- ▶ Puberty for girls brings with it characteristics often perceived as less laudable, as girls generally get rounder and have increased body fat.
- ▶ These changes can serve to further enhance dissatisfaction among girls.
- ▶ Going through puberty later or earlier than peers can have an impact on body image as well as psychological health.
- ▶ Generally, early development for girls and late development for boys present the greatest challenges to healthy body image.

▶ Stang J, Story M (eds) Guidelines for Adolescent Nutrition Services (2005) 155 http://www.epi.umn.edu/let/pubs/adol_book.shtml

LESSON 3

NEVER DIET!

Biologically predicted results of Dieting;
Built-in starvation response (of all mammals)
To seek what has been restricted..
NOT Weakness or Lack of willpower
95% of weight lost is regained

DIETS TEACH PEOPLE TO
FOCUS ON *WHAT* THEY EAT,
RATHER THAN *HOW* THEY EAT,
YET IT IS OUR **RELATIONSHIP**
WITH FOOD THAT MOST
DETERMINES IF WE ARE EATING
MORE THAN OUR BODY IS
ASKING FOR.

THEN FOCUS
YOUR
ATTENTION AND
ENERGY ON
WHAT IS POSSIBLE
TO ACHIEVE...



LESSON 4

- ▶ Satisfy hunger completely with plenty of wholesome, nutrient-rich foods
 - ▶ Learn to pay attention to your “internal cues”...Listen

UNIVERSAL NUTRITION CONCEPTS

- ▶ **Increase Fruits**
- ▶ **Increase Vegetables**
- ▶ **Increase Unrefined Carbohydrates**
- ▶ **Switch to Low Fat Dairy, especially for youth**
- ▶ **Choose Lean sources of Animal Protein
(if not consuming a vegan diet)**
- ▶ **Minimize processed foods**
- ▶ **Drink water, avoid soda and sugary beverages**

LEARN AND UNDERSTAND “INTUITIVE EATING”

Most people believe they'd get fat if they allowed their bodies to decide when or how much to eat. The mind controls the body, right?... NO!

When you eat in response to physical hunger, you gradually experience a sense of satisfaction. This is your body telling you that the hunger is gone. You may not be attuned to your body's signals, or you may choose to continue eating for other reasons, but now it's your mind that's deciding how much to eat, not your body.

Your body will reliably tell you when it's satisfied and when it's full. But if your mind is not willing to listen to your body, you will continue to eat anyway, often “numbing out” signals from your body. Hunger may originate in the body, but it's the mind that distorts it into destructive patterns that may lead to unnecessary weight gain.

LESSON 5

LIMIT SEDENTARY ENTERTAINMENT

Move, Move, Move...Everyone, regardless of size, can achieve a reasonable level of fitness

Embrace “metabolic fitness”



METABOLIC FITNESS:

*IMPROVED BLOOD PRESSURE
AND GLUCOSE TOLERANCE,
REDUCED BLOOD LEVELS OF LDL
CHOLESTEROL AND
TRIGLYCERIDES, INCREASED
LEVELS OF HDL CHOLESTEROL*

- ▶ **Shaping Up Does Not REQUIRE Changing Shape**
- ▶ **Fat can be Fit**
- ▶ **Lifestyle is the problem, body weight is a symptom**

Glenn Gaesser, PhD

University of Virginia

IT IS BEST TO FOCUS JUST ON
IMPROVING HEALTHY BEHAVIORS
AND LET THE POUNDS FALL WHERE
THEY MAY.



LESSON 6

IF YOU LIVE A LIFE OF HEALTH AND
WELLNESS, YOUR BEST, NATURAL
WEIGHT WILL BE REVEALED



TRUST YOUR BODY TO REGULATE ITS OWN WEIGHT.

Does worrying about your weight really change what you weigh?

How about learning to develop an innate sense of confidence that your weight **could** remain stable?

MYTH: EAT, DRINK & BE MERRY...

ANTIDOTES TO TEACH:

Value health and the steps to achieve it.

1. Eat well. Satisfy hunger completely with wholesome food that provides the varied nutrients your body needs on a regular basis. Enjoy entertainment eating after health needs are met.
2. Make movement an active choice. Spend time and energy in activities that promote lifelong fitness. Enjoy sedentary entertainment after fitness needs are met.
3. Accept that size and shape that results as your natural predisposition. Choose role models that make you feel good about who you are.

Lesson 7

CHOOSE ROLE MODELS
WHICH ENABLE YOU TO FEEL
GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF



SEVEN THINGS YOU SHOULD *NEVER* SAY IN FRONT OF YOUR DAUGHTER:

- ▶ Don't Ask, "Do I look fat in this outfit?"
- ▶ Don't Criticize Your Own Figure.
- ▶ Don't compare yourself with other women in a negative way.
- ▶ Don't talk about your weight.
- ▶ Don't brush off compliments.
- ▶ Don't describe food in terms of being bad for you.
- ▶ Don't comment on your daughter's weight.

LESSON 8

DEVELOP AN IDENTITY BASED ON ALL
THE MANY THINGS YOU DO, NOT JUST
YOUR APPEARANCE

*How you look is only one
component of who you are!!*





LESSON 9

BECOME MEDIA SAVVY

Beware the hidden power of advertisements. \$\$\$ spent on strategies to make you feel there is something wrong with you!



LESSON 10

ENCOURAGE FRIENDS, FAMILIES AND
CO-WORKERS TO JOIN YOU.

*Surround yourself with positive
people, who have healthy attitudes
and live a healthy lifestyle.*



LIVE A FULFILLING LIFE. EXPERIENCE MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS. FOCUS ON ENJOYING LIFE, EXACTLY AS IT IS, MAKE THE BEST OF THINGS, EXACTLY AS THEY ARE. WITH THIS ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE, ONE CAN ATTRACT MORE GOOD INTO THEIR LIVES AUTOMATICALLY, WITHOUT HAVING TO CHASE AFTER IT.



HEALTHY EATING

- ▶ is being able to eat when you are hungry and continue eating until you are satisfied. It is being able to choose food you like and eat it and truly get enough of it... not just stop eating because you think you should.
- ▶ is being able to use some moderate constraint in your selection to get the right food, but not being so restrictive that you miss out on pleasurable foods.
- ▶ is giving yourself permission to eat *sometimes* because you are happy, sad, or bored, or just because it feels good.
- ▶ is three meals a day, most of the time, but it can also be choosing to munch along.
- ▶ is leaving some cookies on the plate because you know you can have some again tomorrow, or it is eating more now because they taste so wonderful when they are fresh.

HEALTHY EATING

- ▶ is overeating at times: feeling stuffed and uncomfortable.
- ▶ is also under eating at times and wishing you had more.
- ▶ is trusting your body to make up for your mistakes in eating.
- ▶ takes up some of your time and attention, but keeps its place as only one important area of your life.

HEALTHY EATING

- ▶ In short, normal eating is **flexible**
- ▶ It varies in response to your emotions, your schedule, your hunger, and your proximity to food

THANK-YOU!

