

Dieting and Disordered Eating in the Teenage Years: How to help your daughter and son combat social pressures and maintain a healthy and confident body image

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Adolescents don't believe ...

Dieting can be dangerous

**50% of teenage girls and
30% of teenage boys use
unhealthy weight control
behaviors on a daily basis**

Recent Statistics for Girls

- Over 80% of 10 year old girls report being afraid of being fat
- Between 40-70% of middle school girls are dissatisfied with their body
- Body image disturbance begins to surface between 12-15
- 63% girls surveyed feel that fashion industry body image is unrealistic although 60% still compare themselves to these "false" models

Recent Statistics for Teen Boys

- 18% of boys are highly concerned about their weight and physique
- Of these teens, 1/2 were preoccupied with gaining more muscle and 1/3 were focused on thinness and muscularity
- Boys who have an obsession about weight tend to experience depression, and experiment more with illicit substances and binge-drinking behaviors

Top 3 things you like about yourself. period.

Body will change again in 2-3 years give yourself time to see how much you like it. (hobbies change)

Diet versus Lifestyle

Diet = Deprivation

Lifestyle = Long term
*all food in moderation
+ movement*

*increases neurochemically one's obsessive thoughts
does not work long term*

Facts about Diets

- In teens, dieting has been found to lead to weight gain, not weight loss

Binge Eating and Adolescents

- Girls who diet are 12 times as likely to compulsively overeat as girls who refrain from dieting
- Boys who diet are at a 7 times greater risk for binge eating

★ Flexibility is key ★

★

Ortho = pure/clean

Orthorexia

- Obsession with maintaining a perfect diet rather than a healthy weight and lifestyle
- Teens are obsessively concerned with eating "clean" all the time
 - No sugar, no processed foods, all organic products, preservative free, etc.
 - This disorder becomes dangerous when it impacts social activities
 - Healthy eating taken to the extreme

Healthy eating versus Orthorexia

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating more fruits and vegetables • Enjoying organic foods when available • Finding a balance in your food groups • Eating a variety of foods • Eating through out the day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolating from others • Avoids eating meals prepared by others • Obsessively reading labels and spending too much time in grocery stores • Eating from a repertoire of <10 "acceptable" foods
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Binge Eating Disorder
Affects Males and Females Equally

Body Image Dissatisfaction

- 1/2 of teenage girls and 1/4 of teenage boys are dissatisfied with their bodies
- ★ What do your teen really mean when he/she says "I feel fat"
- Avoid the trap of body comparison

Healthy Body Image

- Needs to be reinforced at home
- Normalize that feeling different from peers is normal and acceptable
- Listen and validate, every chance you get
- Use handouts as talking points with your teen

Need a real feeling... do you feel isolated, lonely, uncomfortable in clothes, bloated?
 Allow a conversation to begin

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A Body to Live with and to Love

- I exercise for health benefits and to reduce stress, not solely for weight loss
- I do not allow my friends or my family members to discriminate on size, shape, and weight
- There is zero tolerance regarding body shaming or "fat talk"
- I will try to encourage my child to avoid body comparisons and I will try to do the same
- I will choose to be positive and focus on my strengths and will encourage my child to do the same
- I will remind my teen about his/her traits that will enhance self-esteem and confidence
- I will model healthy behaviors and changes
- I will praise my accomplishments to my teen and then give "shout outs" to my teen for his/her successes
- I will be flexible in my eating choices and exercise habits

Enhancing Male Body Image

- **Recognize** that bodies come in all different sizes and shapes. There is no one “right” body size. Your body is not and should not be exactly like anyone else’s. Try to see your body as a facet of your uniqueness and individuality.
- **Focus** on the qualities in yourself that you like that are not related to appearance. Spend time developing these capacities rather than letting your appearance define your identity and your worth.
- **Look** critically at advertisements that push the “body building” message. Our culture emphasizes the V-shaped muscular body shape as the ideal for men. Magazines targeted at men tend to focus on articles and advertisements promoting weight lifting, body-building or muscle toning. Do you know men who have muscular, athletic bodies but who are not happy? Are there dangers in spending too much time focusing on your body? Consider giving up your goal of achieving the “perfect” male body and work at accepting your body just the way it is.
- **Remember** that your body size, shape, or weight does not determine your worth as a person, or your identity as a man. In other words, you are not just your body. Expand your idea of “masculinity” to include qualities such as sensitivity, cooperation, caring, patience, having feelings, being artistic. Some men may be muscular and athletic, but these qualities in and of themselves do not make a person a “man.”
- **Find** friends who are not overly concerned with weight or appearance.
- **Be assertive** with others who comment on your body. Let people know that comments on your physical appearance, either positive or negative, are not appreciated. Confront others who tease men about their bodies or who attack their masculinity by calling them names such as “sissy” or “wimp.”
- **Demonstrate respect** for men who possess body types or who display personality traits that do not meet the cultural standard for masculinity; e.g., men who are slender, short, or overweight, gay men, men who dress colorfully or who enjoy traditional “non-masculine” activities such as dancing, sewing or cooking.
- **Be aware** of the negative messages you tell yourself about your appearance or body. Respond to negative self-talk with an affirmation. For example, if you start giving yourself a message like, “I look gross,” substitute a positive affirmation, “I accept myself the way I am,” or “I’m a worthwhile person, fat and all.”
- **Focus** on the ways in which your body serves you and enables you to participate fully in life. In other words, appreciate how your body functions rather than obsessing about its appearance. For example, appreciate that your arms enable you to hold someone you love, your thighs enable you to run, etc.
- **Aim** for lifestyle mastery, rather than mastery over your body, weight, or appearance. Lifestyle mastery has to do with developing your unique gifts and potential, expressing yourself, developing meaningful relationships, learning how to solve problems, establishing goals, and contributing to life. View exercise and balanced eating as aspects of your overall approach to a life that emphasizes self-care.

(Source: Adapted from Shiltz, T. (1997) “Suggestions for Improving Body Image Handout 7.1” in *Eating Concerns Support Group Curriculum*, Community Recovery Press, Greenfield, WI, used with permission.)





Ten Steps To Positive Body Image

One list cannot automatically tell you how to turn negative body thoughts into positive body image, but it can help you think about new ways of looking more healthfully and happily at yourself and your body. The more you do that, the more likely you are to feel good about who you are and the body you naturally have.

1. Appreciate all that your body can do. Every day your body carries you closer to your dreams. Celebrate all of the amazing things your body does for you --running, dancing, breathing, laughing, dreaming, etc.
2. Keep a top-10 list of things you like about yourself -- things that aren't related to how much you weigh or what you look like. Read your list often. Add to it as you become aware of more things to like about you.
3. Remind yourself that "true beauty" is not simply skin-deep. When you feel good about yourself and who you are, you carry yourself with a sense of confidence, self-acceptance, and openness that makes you beautiful regardless of whether you physically look like a supermodel. Beauty is a state of mind, not a state of your body.
4. Look at yourself as a whole person. When you see yourself in a mirror or in your mind, choose not to focus on specific body parts. See yourself as you want others to see you -- as a whole person.
5. Surround yourself with positive people. It is easier to feel good about yourself and your body when you are around others who are supportive and who recognize the importance of liking yourself just as you naturally are.
6. Shut down those voices in your head that tell you your body is not "right" or that you are a "bad" person. You can overpower those negative thoughts with positive ones. The next time you start to tear yourself down, build yourself back up with a few quick affirmations that work for you.
7. Wear clothes that are comfortable and that make you feel good about your body. Work with your body, not against it.
8. Become a critical viewer of social and media messages. Pay attention to images, slogans, or attitudes that make you feel bad about yourself or your body. Protest these messages: write a letter to the advertiser or talk back to the image or message.
9. Do something nice for yourself -- something that lets your body know you appreciate it. Take a bubble bath, make time for a nap, find a peaceful place outside to relax.
10. Use the time and energy that you might have spent worrying about food, calories, and your weight to do something to help others. Sometimes reaching out to other people can help you feel better about yourself and can make a positive change in our world.

