



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & YOUTH

BODY IMAGE & SELF ESTEEM

How do I know if I have a healthy body image and self-esteem?

- You see and think of yourself as a whole person, not a collection of specific body parts.
- You accept and celebrate the uniqueness of your natural body shape and size.
- You understand that a person's physical appearance says very little about their character and value as a person.
- You feel comfortable and confident in your body, and avoid worrying about food, weight, and counting calories.

What is body image and self-esteem?

Body image is both the mental picture you have of your own body and how you see yourself when you look in a mirror.

Self-esteem is how you value and respect yourself as a person. Self-esteem affects how you take care of yourself, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Body image and self-esteem directly influence one another. When you have healthy body image, you feel comfortable about your body and know how to care for it.

When someone doesn't like their body, they may not feel good about themselves or take care of themselves. This can mean not eating or sleeping enough, staying away from friends and family, or turning down chances to do things they would otherwise enjoy.

Having a healthy body image means recognizing the qualities and strengths that make you feel good about yourself.

A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE FRIENDS AND FAMILY ARE SUPPORTIVE OF EACH OTHER AND ACCEPT EACH OTHER'S APPEARANCE IS ESSENTIAL TO SELF-ESTEEM AND HEALTHY BODY IMAGE.

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What can I do?

It's important to remember that each body is unique. Everyone's family background and environment influence their size and weight differently. There's no such thing as a "one size fits all" body type that's right for everyone.

When you feel good about yourself and who you are, you stand tall and naturally carry yourself with a sense of confidence and self-acceptance that makes you beautiful and attractive regardless of your weight, size, or shape.

How do I know if I have a negative body image?

- You focus on your body's weight and perceived flaws.
- You feel uncomfortable and self-conscious about your body.
- You're convinced you would be happier or "better" if you were thin.
- You believe that only other people are attractive.
- You exercise to lose weight or to "make up" for calories that you've eaten.

- 1 Treat your body with respect.
- 2 Eat balanced meals with a variety of nutritious, appealing foods.
- 3 Enjoy regular, moderate exercise for the joy of feeling your body move and grow stronger, not simply to burn calories and control body fat.
- 4 Get enough rest so you can enjoy each day.
- 5 Don't judge yourself and others based on weight, shape, or size.
- 6 Respect people based on the qualities of their character and accomplishments, not just because they appear slim, well-built, or "well put together."
- 7 Dress in a way that makes you feel good.
- 8 Get rid of all the clothes in your closet that don't fit. This includes clothes that you can wear only when dieting and clothes you wear to draw attention away from your body shape.
- 9 Donate or put away clothing that is too small. Make room for clothes that you enjoy wearing.
- 10 Surround yourself with positive friends and family who recognize your uniqueness and like you just as you are. When you're around people and things that make you feel good, you're less likely to base your self-esteem on how your body fits the media's definition of "beauty."

BEAUTY, HEALTH, AND STRENGTH COME IN ALL SIZES. OUR BODIES ARE ALL DIFFERENT—EVERY BODY IS A GOOD BODY.