

TEENS



# WHAT ABOUT WEIGHT?



UConn  
**RUDD CENTER**  
FOR FOOD POLICY & OBESITY

If you are being bullied about your weight, you may be tempted to try to lose weight to make the bullying stop. But it is important to remember that unhealthy eating habits like starving, bingeing, purging or fad dieting are dangerous and can be very harmful to your health. Taking extreme measures to lose weight, often leads to weight regain and a cycle of unhealthy eating – it's just not worth it. Instead, channel your efforts to take action against bullying and find positive ways to take care of your health. Here are some tips:

---

## Value health over appearance

Good health comes from eating a healthy, balanced diet and being active – not from being thin. By focusing on your health rather than how you look, it can help you to enjoy the process of being healthy – instead of torturing yourself over your weight. Nothing good can come out of being weight-obsessed. You can develop healthy habits and a healthy body image by surrounding yourself with accurate information, healthy role models, and support from family and friends.

## Accept size diversity in yourself and others.

Look around – no two bodies are alike. Accepting all sizes is part of a bigger movement to celebrate diversity, respect ourselves and others, and be tolerant of individual differences. People can be healthy at a range of different body weights, and remember that just because someone is thin, doesn't mean they are healthy.

# Eat well and be active.

---

This is an important time in your life when your body is going through a lot of changes, so you'll want to make sure that you are nourishing it properly. Have you ever eaten a meal that was really greasy, like something from a fast food restaurant, and gotten a stomach ache afterwards? Or have you ever had a sugary drink, like soda, and felt a rush of energy followed by feeling really tired? These are signals that our bodies send us when we have too many foods that aren't good for us. It's important to listen to our bodies and nourish them with healthy foods and drinks as often as we can.

Look for activities that you enjoy doing (like walking, yoga, swimming, martial arts, biking, or team sports). When we are physically active on a regular basis it can improve our mood, increase our energy levels, and reduce stress. Physical activity benefits people of all shapes and sizes! Sometimes the hardest part is developing the habit of being active, but it is usually easier if you have a friend or family member do it with you.

Remember that any diet, supplement, or pill that promises quick and easy weight loss is a scam. These products are trying to make money by taking advantage of people who want to lose weight. Be sensible about your health and don't buy into fads.



# Be comfortable in your body.

Just because someone is thin, doesn't mean they are comfortable in their own body. It's common to think: "If I was thin, then I would be happy with my body." But, anyone can have a poor body image regardless of their size. The point is it's not about how big or small you are, it's about having a positive attitude towards yourself.

---

# Resist media messages.

The media is powerful and can shape the way we feel about our bodies. We are constantly surrounded with unrealistic images of men and women in magazines, television, movies, advertising, fashion, and on social media. They try to tell us what we should look like, what we should buy, and what we need to make us happy, but these messages are harmful and false. Life is about who you are and what you do, not what you look like and what you have.

# Find realistic role models.

... Not fake air-brushed celebrities! Put down that tabloid and forget how or why the latest celebrity lost weight – read about someone you can really look up to. Look for examples of people who aren't thin, but who are successful, happy, and challenging common weight stereotypes.

