BODY IMAGE

Healthy people come in all shapes and sizes. Recent studies have shown that very few teenage girls are happy with their appearance, especially their weight. Girls often report being overweight, even when their weight is healthy by medical standards.

Media messages about what is attractive that are found in advertisements, television programs, and movies encourage unrealistic attitudes about body image for both boys and girls.

Girls seem to get the strongest message to be thin. However, boys are also affected by media stereotypes. For males, attractiveness is usually associated with a muscular, athletic build. While this is a healthy model, a boy can also be healthy and fit without being muscular or athletic. Children and teens need to be reminded that the primary objective of most media messages is to sell something and that you do not have to look like a fashion model or bodybuilder to be healthy and happy.
GET MOVING...Be More Active During Leisure Time

Get yourself and your family involved in more activities that require you to move instead of sit.

- Plan activities like hiking, bicycling, dancing, visiting the zoo and museums.
- Start a walking club or program in your area. Or just encourage the kids or teens to walk with you (great for conversations)!
- Take up tennis or golf (walk the course).
- Take classes in dance, yoga, tai chi, or water aerobics.
- Plan games like basketball, soccer, volleyball, or badminton in which the family can all participate.

DID YOU KNOW . . . ?

✓ It is estimated that one million teenagers are affected by eating disorders.

✓ Ninety percent of children and teens with eating disorders are girls.

✓ Families that eat together eat more nutritious meals.

✓ If a girl doesn’t have at least 17% body fat, she won’t have normal periods. This may sound great, but it is not good for her body.

PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

✓ Discuss what you see and hear in media messages related to food and weight. Identify and discuss images that are unrealistic and unhealthy.

✓ Avoid comments or jokes about someone’s weight or appearance. Foster the development of one’s self-worth based on characteristics other than appearance.

✓ Encourage all family members to eat according to their sense of hunger or fullness.

✓ Set an example of healthy eating behaviors for children.

✓ Seek professional help if you see signs of excessive weight loss or avoidance of food or meal times.
FAMILY MEALS MATTER

The influence of family matters a great deal when it comes to being healthy and physically fit. Trying to get everyone together for a meal can be a challenge. However, it is a challenge worth accepting. Families benefit from sitting down with one another over food to discuss the events of the day, to relax, and to nourish their bodies.

Food preparation and clean up time can also be a family time that leads to fun, family conversations. Our values and traditions concerning food are based on family experiences. Make meals enjoyable and help your children create cherished memories. REMEMBER: If you are too busy for family meals, you may be TOO busy!

CLIP AND COOK

Taco Night

The next time tacos are on the menu, gather everyone in the kitchen. Divide up the responsibilities for preparation. Put on some Mariachi music. Encourage everyone to get moving. Dance, enjoy, and the laughter will come naturally. Turn the volume of the music down during the meal to encourage conversation. Plan your family’s next theme night. Following the meal, turn up the music and dance the night away while everyone helps with the clean up.

Taco Salad

1 ½ pounds ground chuck
1 package taco seasoning
1 head lettuce, torn in pieces
2 cups reduced fat cheese, grated

1 (8 ounce) bottle Catalina dressing, fat free
1 (9 ounce) bag baked tortilla chips
Optional: Sour cream guacamole, black olives, salsa, onions, tomatoes

Brown ground chuck and rinse with hot water. Add taco seasoning. Set aside. Mix cheese with lettuce. When ready to serve, mix meat, lettuce, Catalina dressing and broken tortilla chips. Serve immediately with your favorite toppings as noted above. Yield: 8-10 servings.