Teens: Are You Worried About Your Weight?

Television, radio, newspapers, friends, and family often share very different information about what a “healthy weight” is, and how to reach it. It’s hard to know who (or what) to believe.

What We Know:
- If you’re underweight or overweight, and not active – you have higher risks for a number of health problems.
- Your food choices and activity level affect your weight (higher fat and sugar food choices and less activity promote weight gain in most – muscle uses more calories than fat).
- Concerns about weight can cause anxiety and depression for many, which can lead to low self-esteem.
- Healthy people come in a wide range of sizes and shapes – a “perfect one size fits all body” doesn’t exist.
- There are several “tried and true” methods used to determine a healthy weight.
  - Body Mass Index (BMI) - measures your body weight in relation to your height, and your risk for weight related health problems (It doesn’t directly measure body fat, but is considered a reliable substitute.) Low or high numbers may suggest health risks.
  - Growth charts – help to track your growth over time.
  - Waist measurements – health risks go up with higher waist sizes.

Your healthy weight takes into account:
- Your weight in relation to your height (your BMI)
- The amount of body fat you have and where it is located
- Your risks for health problems related to weight

To decide if you want to make a change, think about these questions:
- How do I feel about my body?
- Do I get tired easily?
- Do I have the energy to do the things I enjoy?
- Do I (or my family) have weight related health conditions (diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, difficulty breathing, swelling in hands or feet, etc)?

What Your BMI Percentile Number Means:

Less than the 5th percentile: May be underweight. This may be OK, but warrants a check. Be sure to start the day with a quick breakfast or snack. Try a slice of leftover pizza.

5th percentile to less than the 85th percentile: Healthy weight. A healthy weight & smart eating can help you reach your highest potential. Be sure to do some fun activities each day.

85th percentile to less than the 95th percentile: Overweight. Eating smart and moving more can boost your energy and help you look & feel your best.

95th percentile and higher: Obese. 3 healthy meals plus 2 snacks and some fun activities are a great start. Be sure to watch your drinks. Regular soft drinks & fruit juices can pack on the pounds. Just one extra 12 oz. serving (1 can of soda or juice) per day can add 10 extra pounds a year. Try a bottle of water!!
5 Steps to a Healthy Weight:
Family Fun, Food and Fitness

Get off the diet roller coaster –
And take these five simple steps to whole family health.

**BE ACTIVE**
Change the “E” word from exercise to enjoyment. There’s no need for expensive health club memberships or fancy exercise equipment. Just get physical for a total of 30 to 60 minutes a day, three brisk 10 minute walks is a fabulous start. Just do it – and see how great you feel. Fun is also the key to family fitness, so:

- Make family time active – head to the park with a ball, or a Frisbee, or a kite.
- Walk around the ball field or school while the kids practice (or play a game).
- Plan active vacations – biking, hiking, swimming, or boating.

**BE REALISTIC**
Make small changes in what you eat.
BREAKFAST is a tasty time to get a power surge for the day. Look for high-fiber and lower-fat choices:
- Oatmeal, raisins, and low-free milk
- Leftover cheese pizza with OJ
- Toaster waffles with fruit topping
- Whole grain bagel with PB-and-J

**BE ADVENTUROUS**
Expand your tastes with produce.
SNACKS are the smart way to get a jump-start on eating more fruits and veggies every day (aim for at least 2 ½ - 4 ½ cups each day – the amount needed for a meal plan ranging from 1,200 to 2,000 calories).
- Baby carrots + low-fat dip
- Banana + a carton of 1% milk
- Veggie juice + low-fat string cheese
- Canned pineapple + cottage cheese

**BE FLEXIBLE**
Balance what you eat thru the day.
LUNCHES can be lighter when you are going out for a big dinner. Look for easy ways to lower fat intake.
- Share a small fries with a friend.
- Skip the mayo on your sandwiches.
- Add a fruit to your usual fast food.
- Choose 1% (low-fat) or less milk.

**BE SENSIBLE**
Enjoy all foods – just don’t overdo it.
DINNERTIME is the right time to enjoy moderation and to listen carefully to your signals from your stomach.
- Try eating from smaller size plates.
- Start with moderate portion sizes.
- Turn off the TV and focus on food.
- Eat slowly and chew thoroughly.

Celebrating Healthy Families