

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

- How can I talk to my kids about food and weight without doing harm to their self-worth or to our relationship?
- What can I do to help?
- What should I say?

Parents are Between a Rock and a Hard Place

- “I only buy healthy food, but I find wrappers and bags of junk food in her room. What should I say”?
- “ I know dieting is bad now, but I struggled with my weight as a teen. I just don’t want her have low self-esteem like me. What else can I do?”
- “I told her she looks perfect right now. She doesn’t need to lose weight”. (Ana was throwing up daily)

Some Real Consequences of Dieting

By Age 18

- * Girls who participate in weigh loss dieting have a higher BMI than those who did not diet AND are more likely to be overweight adults.

- * They are 9 times more likely to develop eating disorders

- * They are 4-5 times more likely to attempt suicide in early adulthood.

Statistics

- 50 % of females between the ages of 11 and 13 who are in the normal range see themselves as overweight,
- 80% have attempted to lose weight, with 10 % reporting the use of self induced vomiting.
- 30 million people in the US suffer from an eating disorder and 1/3 are men. 20 % will die as a result of their illness.
- More people die from an eating disorder than any other mental illness
- At least 1 person dies every hour from an eating disorder
- Eating disorders are the leading cause of death for girls between the ages of 11 and 24.

Eating disorders are serious and recovery isn't easy or quick

KNOWN RISK FACTORS

GENETIC RISK FACTORS-TRAITS

Anxious, Sensitive, Perfectionistic, Driven, Harm Avoidant, Early maturation, Difficulty Regulating Emotion, Highly Sensitive to Criticism/Praise, (Girls – Autism Spectrum, Gay Males)

PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK FACTORS - STRESSORS

Transitions/Change, Body Dissatisfaction, Low Self-Worth, Being Overweight as a Child, Feeling Alone/Disconnected from Family or Peers, Feeling Rejected, Peer Bullying or Rejection/Break-up, Illness, Trauma

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FACTORS – MEDIA/PEERS/PARENTS

Sports/Coaches with Weight Focus (gymnastics, ballet, track), Modeling, Acting/Theater/Dance, Photo Shopped/Unachievable Media images/standards, Social Media Filters and Contrived Reality.

Parents - Focus on Achievement/Very High Expectations, Appearance/Body focused, Mother who Has an Eating Disorder, Diets or has No Inhibitions with Food, Makes Negative Comments about Her Body, Child's Body or Others, Abuse or Neglect

Nature and Nurture

Genes Load the Gun, Environment Pulls the Trigger

“there is nothing they (parents) can do to alter the passing down of DNA, **they can alter environments** that influence the likelihood of genes being expressed.”

C.Bulik

- What is protective and what is triggering?

Kids Likely Do What We Do vs. Do What We Say

- Mothers Help to Protect Most by Accepting and Taking Care of Their Own Bodies.
- Fathers Help to Protect Most by Taking an Interest, Not Making Comments about Women's Bodies. (Represent Outside World)
- Both Help to Protect by Having a Healthy and Moderate Relationship with Food and Exercise.

Ask Yourself- What Did You Learn About Food, your Body and Eating From Your Parents and What Is Your Child Learning From You?

DOS and DON'TS

DON'T Diet. Don't encourage dieting. They don't work and they can be harmful. Especially to people who are sensitive, driven, perfectionistic and anxious.

DO Talk about mindful/intuitive/ conscious eating, which is listening and responding to hunger/fullness and eating a balance of protein/fat/carbs.

Dos and Don'ts

DON'T tell your kids they can't eat certain foods or how much to eat (unless there is a medical reason).

DO focus on health not weight. Even if your child needs to lose weight for health reasons or has anorexia, the number on the scale is not more important than his/her health and wellbeing is.

More Do's and Don'ts

DON'T talk negatively about your body (or others) or focus on weight gain or loss. Accomplishment, value and self-worth should not be measured by numbers, sizes or appearance.

DO role model and talk about self-care. We take care of things we value. When we take care of things – they look their best. Drinking water, eating enough nutritious food, showering, getting enough sleep, going to the doctor, taking medicine, exercising are all examples of self-care. Talk about the body as an instrument, not an ornament.

Take a Stand Against Harmful Advertising



More Do's and Don'ts....

DON'T make the focus of your communication physical appearance/grades/wins/accomplishments/homeruns.

DO Notice and value the intrinsic qualities you see in your child and others. (courage, hard work, kindness, character)

DON'T Talk about food in terms of good or bad, clean or dirty, fattening, healthy or unhealthy.

DO Talk about how food feels in the body.

DO have family meals. It Makes A Difference worth it.

DON'T have unreasonably high expectations for your kids.

DO allow for mistakes and disappointment and role model healthy ways of coping with “failures” or when things go badly.

DON'T think you are protecting your kids by being the first person to criticize or judge them.

DO protect them by being a safe place to land, someone they aren't afraid to be honest with. This might be the best thing you can do to protect them. Feeling safe and accepted at home are needed for emotional well-being.

DON'T bail your kid out of every difficult situation, or do it for them

DO allow them to suffer the natural consequences of their actions as much as possible.

Balance - Nurturing/Limit setting

Validation – *I understand why you are feeling that way because_____. I understand because_____*

Emotional support – *You are stronger than you realize, I know it's scary, but I think you can do it. Everything will be okay. Is there anything I can do?*

Limit setting - *Time to get in the car now. This is what we have to do. My answer is still no. These are the rules.*

ASSESSMENT – 2 OR MORE POSITIVE ANSWERS INDICATES EATING DISORDER (99%
ACCURACY)

1. DO YOU MAKE YOURSELF SICK BECAUSE YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLY FULL?
2. DO YOU WORRY YOU HAVE LOST CONTROL OVER HOW MUCH YOU EAT?
3. HAVE YOU RECENTLY LOST OR GAINED MORE THAN 15 POUNDS IN A 3 MONTH
PERIOD?
4. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU'RE TOO FAT WHEN OTHERS SAY YOU ARE TOO THIN?
5. WOULD YOU SAY THAT FOOD DOMINATES YOUR LIFE?