

## NUTRITION INFORMATION FROM YOUR DIETITIAN

### Body Image

Body image refers to how we view and think about our own body size and proportion. True body image is more than the way we view our outside appearance. It's a part of our sense of worth, abilities, and inner beauty.

There are many factors that can influence body image, including social media, our peers, ethnicity, and family values. It can sometimes be hard to see past these factors, but remember:

- **There is no ideal body.** There is a great diversity in body size and shape. We all have our own genetic makeup. Part of what makes people so interesting and beautiful is each person's unique qualities.
- **Body image expectations are often unrealistic.**
- **Being a specific size or weight does not necessarily make one healthier or happier.**

### Positive body image

Positive body image is:

- Appreciating and celebrating your natural body shape.
- Seeing your different body parts as they really are.
- Understanding that a person's physical appearance says little about their character or value as a person.
- Refusing to spend time worrying about weight, food, and calories.
- Feeling comfortable and confident in your unique body.

### Negative Body Image

Negative body image is:

- Not seeing your different body parts as they really are.
- Being certain that only other people are attractive and that your body size or shape is a sign of personal failure.
- Feeling embarrassed, self-conscious, and anxious about your body, and spending a lot of time thinking about your physical imperfections.
- Feeling uncomfortable and awkward in your body.

### Don't criticize about weight

#### *Watch what you say about yourself:*

- Don't criticize your own body – even as a joke.
- Don't compare your own weight, size, or shape to someone else's.

Being healthy means being positive about yourself. Accept your uniqueness!

#### *Watch what you say about others:*

- Don't make negative remarks about other's bodies.
- Show appreciation for each person's unique personality, coloring, body shape, and size.
- Ask others in your family to do the same.

## 10 Steps to Positive Body Image

One list cannot tell you how to instantly turn off negative body thoughts or suddenly have a positive body image. But it can help you start thinking about new ways of looking at yourself and your body in a more healthy and happy way.

1. **Appreciate all that your body can do.** Celebrate the amazing things your body does for you — laughing, dreaming, running, dancing, breathing, working, and thinking. Every day, your body brings you closer to your dreams.
2. **Keep a top 10 list of things you like about yourself.** Focus on things that aren't related to how much you weigh. Read your list often. As you become more aware of things you like about yourself, add these to your list.
3. **Remind yourself that “true beauty” is not simply skin deep.** Beauty is a state of mind and not a state of body. When you feel good about yourself, you carry yourself with a sense of confidence and self-acceptance. This makes you beautiful.
4. **Shut down those voices inside your head telling you that your body is not “right” or that you are a “bad” person.** Thinking positive thoughts can overpower negative ones.
5. **Surround yourself with positive people.** It is easier to feel good about yourself and your body when you are around others who know the importance of liking yourself just as you naturally are.
6. **Look at yourself as a whole person.** When you see yourself in a mirror or in your mind, choose not to focus on specific body parts. See yourself as you want others to see you — as a whole person.
7. **Become a critical viewer of social and media messages.** Pay attention to images, slogans, or attitudes that make you feel bad about yourself or your body. Protest these messages: Write a letter to the advertiser, or talk back to the image or message. Realize that an average magazine cover can cost thousands of dollars and weeks of digital photo editing. These are not real people.
8. **Wear clothes that make you feel good and are comfortable.** Work with your body, not against it.
9. **Do something nice for yourself.** Something that shows your body that you appreciate it. Find a peaceful place to relax, make time for a nap, or take a hot bubble bath. When you take care of your body, it will take care of you in return.
10. **Do something to help others.** Use the time and energy that you might have spent worrying about food, calories, and weight to do something for someone else. Reaching out to people can help you feel better about yourself and make a positive change in our world.

### **Howard's Law of Human Worth**

- All have infinite, internal, eternal, and unconditional worth as persons.
- All have equal worth as people. Worth is not comparative or competitive.
- Externals neither add to nor diminish worth. (Externals include things like money, looks, performance, and achievements.)
- Worth is stable and never in jeopardy (even if someone rejects you).
- Worth does not have to be earned or proved. It already exists. Just recognize, accept, and appreciate it.

Claudia A. Howard (1992)

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