



June 2018

Kids and body image

Growing up can be tough. The challenges of school, relationships with friends, sports and other activities can be stressful for children. Peer pressure, along with what they see and hear daily via social media, TV, movies and video games, can cause them to stress out about how they look. Comparing themselves with their friends—or, worse, with supermodels, movie stars, or pro athletes—can then lead to a negative body image.

- An obsession with their size, shape, weight, and muscles (or lack thereof)
- Spending time looking in the mirror looking for and pointing out flaws they think they see
- Talking negatively about themselves
- Constantly looking for ways to improve their looks
- Comparing themselves with others

If you know a child who's struggling with their body image, here are some things you can do to help:

- Start a discussion about body image.
- Talk about the messages we get through media.
- Try to avoid using judgmental terms like "fat" or "skinny."
- Stress the importance of healthy eating and physical activity.
- Support their efforts and praise achievements.
- Set a good example.

Quick Takes



A Healthy View of Body Image

Let's face it: we all think about our appearance. And we probably worry how others perceive us. A little vanity is only human.

Some people, however, have unrealistic expectations about their appearance and develop a negative body image.

Having a negative body image can really affect your self-esteem. You might feel shame, anxiety, and worthlessness. And a negative body image can lead to serious conditions like depression and eating disorders. In our society, we're bombarded with images of perfect-looking people (models, movie stars, athletes, etc.) and it's easy to think that's how we should look. Even young children are affected by the media's unrealistic portrayals.

Children also pick up on how their parents view themselves.

Try to turn off that loop of negative body image messages going through your head. Instead, learn to accept your uniqueness and focus on keeping your body healthy and strong. Eating well and exercising, doing things you enjoy and celebrating your accomplishments will all help boost your self-esteem.

And try to avoid influencing your children by making comments about your own appearance—and be especially careful with what you say about theirs.

In this issue, we offer more information about unhealthy body image and kids.

If you think there's a serious problem

When a child or adolescent has serious issues about the way they see themselves, it can lead to depression, negative behaviors, and eating disorders. Watch for these signs:

- Skipping meals, fasting, constant dieting, or binge eating
- Obsessive exercise/weight training
- Using diet pills or laxatives for losing weight or growth hormones for developing muscle mass

If you think your child has or may have an eating disorder or other serious body image issue, talk to a doctor or health care professional. Getting the right treatment can make all the difference.

Sources:

ACOG. Media and Body Image. June 2016.

<https://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Media-and-Body-Image> (Accessed 3/21/2018).

Mayo Clinic. Healthy body image: Tips for guiding girls. August 11, 2015.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/tween-and-teen-health/in-depth/healthy-body-image/art-20044668> (Accessed 3/21/2018).

NEDA. Eating Disorders in Men and Boys. 2018.

<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/learn/general-information/research-on-males> (Accessed 3/21/2018).

Kids Health. Encouraging a Healthy Body Image. July 2015.

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/body-image.html> (Accessed 3/21/2018).

Asparagus with Orange Zest and Shallots

Makes 2-3 servings

Takes under 30 minutes

Serve as a side dish or an elegant first course. If you can only find thick asparagus spears, peel the tough outer layer with a vegetable peeler or a paring knife.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound (480 g) thin asparagus spears, tough stems trimmed
- 1 large orange, scrubbed
- 1 shallot, sliced
- Sea salt to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Choose a skillet just large enough to hold the asparagus and set over high heat. Add water to fill 1/2 inch (1.25 cm) deep.
2. With a paring knife or a vegetable peeler, remove 2 or 3 strips of orange peel and add to the skillet. Slice the orange in half and squeeze the juice into the skillet. Add the shallots as well.
3. When the liquid comes to a boil, add asparagus spears and cook until just tender, about 2 minutes.
4. Drain and season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

The asparagus is also good served cold, drizzled with a little reduced fat vinaigrette.



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

47 Calories
 4 g Protein
 .5 g Fat
 .1 g Saturated fat
 9 g Carbohydrate
 2.4 g Dietary fiber
 16 mg Sodium