

health and wellness



How Do I Know If I have Unrealistic and Unhealthy Goals about My Body and Weight?

- You obsess about counting calories and fat grams in the food you eat in order to control your weight and body fat.
- You restrict the amount of food you eat by skipping meals, dieting or fasting.
- You feel compelled to exercise, and feel guilty or anxious if you don't work out every day, even when you are tired or sick.
- You avoid participating in sports and other activities like swimming, dancing, and going out to parties and dinner with friends and family because you feel self-conscious about the way your body looks.

Why is Health & Wellness Important?

The key strategies to feeling and looking your best and having a positive outlook in life are to eat well, keep active, and maintain a healthy body weight. It's not easy to eat well consistently and keep fit with a busy schedule and fast food so easily available. For most people, keeping fit means a special trip to work out at a gym and run on a treadmill, to lift weights, or do aerobics. Being active can also mean walking or bicycling to school or work, and taking the stairs instead of the elevator - and it works best when you make it a regular part of your routine! For kids, exercise can mean gym class at school, soccer practice, or karate lessons. It can also mean playing tag in the park, using the monkey bars, or riding bikes with friends and family. When both kids and adults alike have negative thoughts and feelings about food and their body weight, and when exercise is no longer for fun but a way to burn calories, it can be serious and lead to a broad range of health issues.

Everyone can benefit from regular, moderate exercise and life-long healthy eating habits. This includes having a positive attitude about eating and food, knowing how to read your body's signals in order to eat when hungry, and stopping when you are full and content. Take care of what your body needs so that it runs efficiently by planning your meals and snacks ahead of time and preparing food at home. Know enough about food, nutrition and eating for energy to make informed choices when dining out socially with friends and family. When consistent healthy eating habits are combined with regular physical activity, the health benefits go beyond having a leaner body. They also include stronger muscles and bones, a decrease in the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, lower blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels, and a better and more forward outlook on life. You will also sleep better, have less stress and anxiety, be able to concentrate more at school or work, and feel better about handling all of life's physical and emotional challenges.

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What Can I Do?

- 1) Don't deny your body valuable nutrients by dieting, skipping meals or using weight loss products.
- 2) Stop searching for the perfect diet. 95% of diets fail because they don't work at decreasing your size, just your self-esteem.
- 3) Avoid categorizing foods as "forbidden" or "off-limits." Eating shouldn't be associated with guilt or shame.
- 4) Instead of seeing certain foods as "good" or bad, try thinking of them in terms of "a good thing to eat often," or "a good thing to eat occasionally."
- 5) Your body knows what it needs in order to keep running efficiently and be at its best. Listen and respond to what your body needs when you are naturally hungry. When you don't listen, your body will find ways to remind you like headaches or a growling stomach.
- 6) Eat in moderation and know when your body begins to feel full and content. For some people, this might mean eating 5 or 6 smaller, well-balanced meals or snacks throughout the day instead of 3 large meals. You should feel satisfied after each meal, not overstuffed or still hungry.
- 7) Eat because you are actually hungry, not because you are bored, stressed or feeling lonely.
- 8) Practice mindful eating. Sit down when eating snacks and meals. Chew your food slowly, and enjoy the tastes, smells, and textures of the food you are eating.
- 9) Enjoy family meals. Research has shown the many social, academic and health benefits of eating together as a family.
- 10) Be active, have fun and participate in sports and other activities that you enjoy regardless of your body shape or size.

Where do I go from here?

Jessie's Legacy a program of **Family Services of the North Shore** provides web based eating disorders prevention resources to support BC youth, families, educators and professionals. Family Services of the North Shore is one of the 7 BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information.

Visit www.familyservices.bc.ca or www.heretohelp.bc.ca

♥ **Counselling**

♥ **Support**

♥ **Education**

Family Services of the North Shore is an accredited not-for-profit community-based agency that offers education, support and counselling services. We also lead the provincial work in eating disorders prevention. Family Services of the North Shore has been caring for the community for over 60 years. Our high-profile, proactive presence throughout the province connects the community through a variety of programs that create an environment for all families and individuals to thrive.



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