

Find this newsletter online here:

<https://vmfh.org/our-services/primary-care-in-person-and-virtual-care/pediatric-care/nutrition-fitness-for-life.html>

Self-Esteem & Body Image



Parents often tell me their child or teen is struggling with a negative body image. I've heard these concerns from parents of kids as young as six. As adults, we look at kids and see their beauty, personality, talents and all the things that make them special. We wonder, why don't kids see themselves as we see them?

Unfortunately, the world is full of negative messages that lead kids to be critical of their bodies. Kids judge and tease other kids. This bullying results in kids internalizing those messages. Also, movies and other media promote unrealistic expectations of what people "should" look like. We need to counteract all those negative and judgmental messages with lots of positive ones, so kids learn to value themselves and their bodies.

Here are some suggestions to help you coach your kids:

- **Start by accepting yourself.** Do your best to think and say positive things about yourself and your body. Your kids are listening. You're setting the example.
- **Try to avoid judgmental language.** In NFL class one of the first things I teach families is, we do not say the word "fat" unless we're talking about the greasy stuff in food.

We talk about the importance of being "in balance" so we can be healthy and feel well. And, importantly, **everyone** has the right to feel proud of themselves and their bodies no matter what.

- **Compliment your kids for the things that truly matter:** kindness, courage, generosity, talents and skills.
- **Celebrate the journey** (making healthy food and exercise choices) rather than the destination (achieving a healthy weight).
- **It's about health, not weight.** I truly believe it's possible to feel proud of ourselves and our bodies **while** we're working on our healthy lifestyle. Remember, kids who are confident and feel good about themselves are more likely to take care of their bodies as they grow up.



Don't say anything about **YOURSELF**



that you wouldn't say about your **BEST FRIEND.**

Helpful Resources

Gardening classes and programs from Seattle's Tilth Alliance:

<https://tilthalliance.org/our-work/youth-families/>



Tips on **gardening with children** from Rutgers.edu:

<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs003/>

Healthy Recipes

Try making Skinny Taste's **Honey Sriracha Roasted Salmon Rice Bowls** with your kids. Younger kids can work on their measuring skills and help mix the glaze. Older kids and teens can slice the cucumbers and avocado. Remember, kids who help cook are more likely to try new foods and enjoy what's being served.

<https://www.skinnytaste.com/salmon-rice-bowls/>



For a meatless Monday (or anytime), try Skinny Taste's **Vegetarian Enchiladas with Butternut Squash and Black Beans**. They take a while to make, so get those kids to help. Reviewers said this recipe is absolutely worth the effort!

To reduce the sodium, choose a lower-salt enchilada sauce, or make your own.

<https://www.skinnytaste.com/butternut-squash-and-black-bean/>

It doesn't get much easier than this. To make Eating Well's **Sweet Potato with Hummus Dressing**, just microwave a sweet potato, heat up some chopped kale and black beans in a pan, add a little water to some hummus for a dressing, and voila. Try one for lunch, or make several for a family dinner with a green salad or other veggies on the side.

<https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/260717/stuffed-sweet-potato-with-hummus-dressing/>

NFL Joke Corner:

Question: *How do sheep like to exercise?*

Answer: *Zum-BAAAAH.*

Kids and teens need **at least 60 minutes of exercise or active play every day**. Find fun ways to stay active together as a family!

What is N.F.L.?

Virginia Mason Franciscan Health's **Nutrition and Fitness for Life Program** is a 6-week course for children and teens **with their parents**. Families learn how to eat wisely and stay active together.

Classes are now being offered remotely on Zoom. Find the schedule and more on our web page:

<https://vmfh.org/our-services/primary-care-in-person-and-virtual-care/pediatric-care/nutrition-fitness-for-life.html>

The next session starts April 27.

Registration is required. To sign up, for class dates, or if you have any questions, just email me! –Beth

Let's all help each other stay healthy.
–Beth

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