

A positive body image

Getting the balance right

Turn on the TV, browse social media sites or flick through a magazine and chances are you'll see pictures of perfect looking celebrities staring back. This might affect your body image and could make you feel bad about yourself or that you should try to change the way you are.

Many young people who are perfectly normal and healthy feel that they don't look 'right' because they are comparing themselves to role models such as pop stars, models or other celebrities who are often seen as skinny. This can lead to an unhealthy body image. If you do feel that you are overweight, talk to an adult you can trust and try to find out more about healthy eating and exercise.

“It's a good idea to eat well and stay a healthy weight but some young people, can take dieting too far and develop an eating disorder.”

The two main types of eating disorders are anorexia nervosa which is when you starve yourself and bulimia nervosa which is when you make yourself sick after you eat or take laxatives. They are both very bad for you.

Make sure you talk to an adult or friend you trust to get the help you need.

Could this be you?

If you have an eating disorder:

- It's hard to cope with an eating disorder alone - talk to someone you trust.
- If you are worried ask your parent or carer to make an appointment for you with your GP.
- Remember that the sooner you get some help, the easier it will be for you to beat your problem.

If a friend has an eating disorder:

- Tell them that you're worried and that you're there for them.
- Get them to see their GP.
- Set a good example and show your friend how important it is to have a healthy diet.

Facts about eating disorders:

1. Eating disorders can be beaten.
2. An eating disorder is serious.
3. An eating disorder is not a dieting craze.
4. An eating disorder is not attention seeking.
5. An eating disorder is an illness.

“Boys as well as girls can have eating disorders.”

Look out for:

Signs of Anorexia include:

- Eating less and less.
- Losing a lot of weight very quickly.

- Growing more body hair (usually girls).

Signs of Bulimia include:

- Eating too much in one go.
- Going to the toilet after eating to be sick.
- Sore throat and mouth infections.

Skinny & fat shaming

We usually hear about body shaming being directed at women with curves. But that's not always the case - skinny shaming can be just as damaging.

This may be a simple comment like 'when did you last have a good meal?' from a friend or perhaps more damaging messages from strangers via facebook and twitter.

It's up to all of us to stop the well known stereotype of a thing called skinny shaming. Skinny shaming and fat shaming are not separate, opposing issues - they are the same issue. We are all equal and all bodies are beautiful. Accept yourself for YOU and others for who they are and you will be truly beautiful.