

Helping Girls Love Their Bodies



Every “body” deserves respect.

Body image issues are affecting teenage girls at alarming rates. By age 17, nearly four out of five girls report feeling unhappy with their bodies. But parents and guardians, you can help! By telling them they're enough as is and supporting their healthy choices, we can help them connect with their inner strength and a positive self-image.

Signs of Body Image Issues

Teenage girls rarely express body image issues openly, but there are signs to look out for:

- **Antisocial behavior** — Withdrawal from friends and family.
- **Anxiety** — Appearing nervous and overly self-critical.
- **Failing grades** — Poor performance at school is a sign of distress.
- **Negative body critiques** — Often is overly critical of their body.
- **Skiping meals** — Avoids eating or hides eating habits.

How Parents Can Help

Show them how to take ownership of their peace of mind with the skills they need.

- **Create a safe place** — Help them feel secure with their questions and concerns.
- **Food literacy** — Teach food labels and involve them in grocery shopping.
- **Healthy diets** — Encourage healthy foods with benefits, like better skin and reduced acne.
- **Social media limits** — It's OK to set limits on phones and view the content on their feeds.
- **Time to talk** — Routinely talk with your kids about what's going on in their lives.



Benefits of Exercise and Sports

Exercise and sports elevate physical health, mental well-being and a sense of belonging. Whether it's dance, soccer, walking or yoga, encourage your teen to move for joy to help them find better health inside and out.

- **Better health** — Physical fitness helps improve sleep and metabolism.
- **Finding satisfaction** — Accomplishing a shared or individual goal builds joy.
- **Improved mood** — Exercise releases endorphins, a mood-boosting chemical.
- **Overall strength** — Feeling physically fit and healthy elevates body confidence.
- **Social skills** — Working with others helps build connection.

Mental Health Boost Exercise

Small moments of gratitude and affirmation can go a long way.

1. Start 10 minutes before bed.
2. Choose a positive affirmation about yourself, like "I'm loved."
3. Repeat the same positive affirmation several times.
4. Change it up every week to keep it fresh.

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