

# Body Image in Children: Care Instructions

## Overview

Teens and preteens are often very concerned about their bodies and their weight. This makes sense, since their bodies are going through big changes.

But it can be even harder to deal with body changes when TV, movies, ads, and social media show unrealistic images of what the "ideal" teen body should look like. The stress of trying to look like the "ideal" could lead to unhealthy thoughts about food, diets, and exercise.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

## How can you care for your child at home?

- No matter what your child's weight is, avoid talking in terms of your child's weight. Instead, talk about your child's health. You can focus on being active and other healthy lifestyle choices.
- Compliment children about the things they do, not just how they look. When you talk about how children look, focus on their eyes, smile, or sense of humor. Don't comment on their height, weight, body size, or body shape.
- Don't make comments that link being thin to being popular or healthy.
- Teach children to take good care of their bodies.
- Don't criticize other people for the way they look.
- Praise children and teens for the things that make them different from other people.
- Promote healthy eating and exercise as lifelong habits.
- Eat meals together as a family. Focus on connecting with each other, rather than on how much or what your child eats.

## When should you call for help?



Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You have concerns about your child's weight or eating habits.

## Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://kp.org/health>

Enter **V631** in the search box to learn more about "**Body Image in Children: Care Instructions**".

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