Be Positive About Food

How you think and talk about food and body image can have a significant impact on your overall health.

Unfortunately, some of the most well-meaning practices—like restricting food or focusing on body weight—can end up being harmful. They can actually promote behaviors and the poor self-image they aim to prevent.

Listed below are several tips on how to support each other in healthier attitudes toward food:

- **Forget "forbidden foods."** Being overly restrictive about certain "bad" foods can backfire. The pressure to be perfect can lead to all kinds of unhealthy behavior. Plan for treats from time to time and practice moderation. If you make good food choices and have reasonable portions most of the time, you're doing great.
- **Don't use food as a reward, bribe, or punishment.** This can lead to "comfort eating"—overeating when you're stressed—and other unhealthy behaviors. Instead, reward or motivate yourself (or your kids) with an activity: a trip to the park, a hike with a friend, or a movie.
- **Stay away from fad diets.** Beware of eating plans that promise to help you drop weight, build muscle, or lose (or gain) inches in a "quick and easy" way. Such diets rarely work in the long term—and they can be unsafe. Instead, build lifelong healthy habits for eating and activity.
- **Learn about nutrition**. Take a class or read a book on nutrition. Find out how different foods nourish your body. Be food friendly.
- **Grow it yourself.** Start a garden in your yard or in containers on your porch or windowsill. Growing your own vegetables is a fun way to get some exercise and share time with your family. It's also a great reminder that food is healthy and nurturing, not harmful.

Reference

Intermountain Healthcare. Healthy Habits, 8 to LiVe By. Be positive about food. <http://intermountainlive.org/habits/positivefood.xml>.

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