



Teen Talk

A quarterly newsletter from the Children's Hospital League's Resource Center • youngwomenshealth.org

Spring 2009

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Center for Young Women's Health



Children's Hospital Boston

Newsletter Coordination & Layout

Amanda Kohn, BFA

Consulting Editors

Phaedra P. Thomas, RN, BSN

Freedom Baird, MS

S. Jean Emans, MD

Written by

The Youth Advisors

Center for Young Women's Health

Children's Hospital Boston

333 Longwood Avenue, 5th Fl.

Boston, MA 02115 | 617-355-2994

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Special thanks to:

The Children's Hospital League and The Cabot Family Charitable Trust for their generous support of the Center for Young Women's Health and the Youth Advisory Program

ALL ABOUT BMI

By Dennisse Rorie (Adapted from *BMI: A Guide for Teens*)



Next year, all public schools in Massachusetts will send BMI (Body Mass Index) report cards home to parents of students in first, fourth, seventh, and tenth grades. Students in these grades will be weighed and measured in school,

and their BMI will be calculated. The BMI report card will be used to identify students who are underweight, overweight, or obese, and to let parents know if their child needs to make healthy lifestyle changes. BMI is kind of difficult to understand. That's why I asked one of our nutritionists, Whitney Evans, MS, RD, LDN to help answer the most commonly asked questions about BMI.

What is Body Mass Index (BMI)?

BMI is a measurement used to estimate a person's body fat. It can be used to identify underweight, overweight and obesity. Everyone needs some body fat, but having too much can put a person at risk for health problems such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

How is BMI measured?

BMI is a mathematical calculation of your weight (*in pounds*) multiplied by 703, divided by your height (*in inches*), squared.

What does my BMI number mean?

Once your health care provider or school nurse calculates your BMI, they use a special chart to convert this number into a percentile. Your percentile tells you how your BMI compares with other teens your age and sex. Your health care provider can tell you if your BMI percentile falls into the underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese category.

What if my BMI is high?

If your BMI is in the underweight, overweight, or obese categories, it is important that you see your health care provider. Keep in mind that BMI is just an estimate of body fat. Most teens who have a BMI in the overweight or obese category also have a high amount of body fat; but, there are some who don't. This is true for muscular teens (*especially those who work out or are very athletic and toned*).

continued on reverse...

Tynaya's Health Tips

Keeping Relationships Healthy

A healthy relationship should make you feel completely safe, comfortable, and good about yourself and the people around you.



Healthy relationships don't happen overnight. They are built on important ingredients such as trust, respect and good communication. There are a lot of benefits to having healthy relationships. When your relationship is healthy, you will naturally feel good about yourself. It's also easy to have fun and enjoy the company of the person you are with. On the other hand, unhealthy relationships can make you feel unsafe, worried, angry, and confused, which can take a toll on your self-esteem and self image.

Your relationship should have some basic standards including:

• Communication:

Open communication is very important. You should be able to discuss your likes and dislikes about your relationship. Rather than yelling and screaming, sit down, work out your differences, and come to an agreement.

• Respect:

There should be a mutual respect between you and your partner. It is crucial to know every person's limitations and boundaries. This will help you treat them with respect. If your partner respects you, they won't pressure you to do something that you don't feel comfortable doing.

• Trust:

Trust is the key! A part of trust is having enough confidence in your partner to know that they will love your mind, body, and soul. Always remember that it is hard to gain someone's trust, but if you lose it, it's even harder to get it back. ♥



Erica's Corner

Have you ever wondered what the symbol and number on the bottom of your plastic soda or water bottle mean? I have some answers for you. What I found out is the symbol itself (*usually a triangle*) means that the item is recyclable. The number inside of the symbol is what's important. This number is a code for the kind of plastic that was used to make the bottle.

The plastic industry has a system to identify seven different types of plastic. Some of these plastics are thought to be harmful because they release a chemical called BPA (*short for Bisphenol A*) into the liquid inside the bottle. A #7 bottle contains BPA and is believed to be the most toxic. Two other types of bottles, #3 and #6, are also thought to be dangerous because they contain another harmful chemical, similar to BPA. So what should you do until further research sorts out any safety concerns? You may decide to avoid eating or drinking out of any type of plastic container with the numbers 3, 6, or 7 until there is more research about BPA and BPA-like chemicals. In the meantime, here are some tips:

- Drink filtered tap water, which is cheaper and better for the environment.
- Buy a reusable water bottle. Nalgene® makes a BPA-free plastic bottle, and stainless steel or aluminum bottles are also a good alternative.

For more information, you can go to: fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/bpa.html ♥



HIEU'S HOW-TO

How to balance school, your activities and you!

Sometimes you might feel like there is way too much going on for you to handle. Whether you have a test coming up, your coach wants you to practice more, or you are working to make money on the side, the most important things to remember are time management, and your mental and physical health.

First of all, try to relax! You can't get your life in order unless you have a clear mind and you feel your best. Being organized and managing your time will help to lower your stress.

Here are some tips to help you with time management:

- **Use an agenda (or planner):**
This can be paper or digital, and can help keep you organized so you can stay on top of your school assignments.
- **Prioritize:**
If activities such as playing video games or watching TV are conflicting with your schoolwork, you should probably reconsider what's most important.
- **Communicate:**
You need to be able to talk to people, and let them know what you've got going on in your life. Sometimes just talking can help when you're stressed out. Try talking to a teacher, parent, or someone else that you trust.

Don't worry, you're not alone - many teens feel too busy or overwhelmed at times. Some people may balance better than others either because they have less to do, or they aren't involved in as many activities. Proper time management and being able to communicate with someone you trust will definitely help you balance your life and make you feel better ♥

For more tips and articles on how to handle stress, be sure to visit youngwomenshealth.org and youngmenshealthsite.org.



ask Nisi

Hey Nisi, I had unprotected sex and I'm scared I might be pregnant... can you tell me about EC?

Sex is a huge responsibility for teens to take on, and you have to be very careful. Having unprotected sex is not a good choice. There can be major consequences if you don't use proper protection. Pregnancy is a scary thing to face, especially as a teenager.

Emergency contraception (EC) aka "the morning after pill" is a backup method of birth control that you can use if you had unprotected sex and you don't want to become pregnant.

Plan B® is one type of emergency contraception. It's available over-the-counter at most pharmacies in and around the Boston area, and if you're 18 or older you can buy it yourself without a prescription. If you are younger than 18, you will need to get a prescription from your health care provider. Not all pharmacies carry Plan B®, so it's a good idea to call your local pharmacy before you go.

Taking EC will lower your risk of getting pregnant if you take it within 120 hours of unprotected sex. An important thing to remember is that the sooner you take EC, the more effective it is. However, emergency contraception should not be used as birth control. The best way to prevent pregnancy is not to have sexual intercourse. If you do decide to have intercourse, remember to practice safe sex and use birth control. If you've had a pregnancy scare and have taken EC, you should make an appointment with your health care provider and talk about getting on steady birth control. Since you've had unprotected sex, it would also be a good idea to be screened for sexually transmitted infections. ♥

For more information about EC, check out our emergency contraception guide located online at youngwomenshealth.org.

All About BMI, continued...

Their weight may be higher because of extra "muscle" and not because of extra body fat. Also, BMI can change quickly when you are growing or going through puberty because during these times, weight, height, and body fat change at different times and rates.

If your health care provider is concerned that your BMI is too high, you may need to make healthy lifestyle changes such as increasing physical activity, drinking less soda and sugar-sweetened beverages, and reducing your portion sizes. ♥

For more information on BMI, healthy lifestyle changes, healthy relationships, and more, check out our website online at: youngwomenshealth.org

Thank you! Gracias! Danke! Merci!



The CYWH is forever grateful to the Children's Hospital League for the opportunity

to have launched the first Center of this kind in the nation. The League's funding has been essential to our mission to empower adolescent girls about their health. With the League's continued support we will be able to reach millions of more girls and their families around the globe.

Thank you! Gracias! Danke! Merci!