



Teasing... No It's No Laughing Matter!

Appearance is the most common reason for childhood teasing (Shapiro, Baumeister, & Kessler, 1991).

Adolescence is a particularly vulnerable time for weight and shape-based teasing. It can negatively affect body image, a concept central to the development of a youth's self-esteem (Neumark-Sztainer et al, 2002).

Recently, about 25% of adolescent males and 30% of adolescent females reported being teased about their weight by their peers. Weight-based teasing by family members was also reported by about 45% of adolescents.

A total of 25% of those adolescents reported being teased by both peers and family members (Eisenberg, et al, 2003).

Adolescents teased by either their peers or a family member are more likely to report lower body satisfaction and self-esteem, as well as experience more depression and suicidal thoughts than adolescents who aren't teased.

These health concerns are even more common in adolescents who report being teased by both their peers and a family member (Eisenberg, et al, 2003). In fact, adolescents who reported being teased about their weight by both their peers and a family member were nearly three times more likely to have made a suicide attempt than non-teased adolescents.

Parents:

For more Teasing information on-line visit - <http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/thestudentbody>

What Can You Do?

- ✓ Communicate openly with your children about body image issues and allow them to discuss issues around weight-based teasing and their changing bodies.
- ✓ Work to ensure that your child's school has policies around weight and size-based teasing. Include the students in making these policies.
- ✓ Be aware of your own attitudes and behaviours towards people of different shapes and sizes.
- ✓ Emphasize weight and shape acceptance, using messages that support diversity, highlight people's unique strengths, and promote the development of positive self-esteem.
- ✓ Provide children and adolescents with skills that enable them to cope with the negative messages of teasing in more healthy ways.

