

LESSON 6: Have a Healthy Body Image

Student Learning Objectives:

The students will:

- Recognize the range of body types.
- Summarize the factors that determine body weight.
- Choose to have a realistic view of a healthy body image.
- Formulate guidelines for eating to share with their peers.

Preparation

- Gather the needed materials.
- Gather pictures of models and body builders to use with Activity 1 if you wish.
- Decide how you will form groups for Activity 3.
- Collect nutrition information from local fast food restaurants and/or other local restaurants.
- Duplicate enough copies of the Student Worksheet, Fast Food Survival Guide for Teens, so that each student will have one, plus one for each small group.
- Make a transparency of the Transparency Master, Society's Idealized Body Types, if it has not been provided in your materials.

Materials

Equipment

- Overhead projector and screen

Resources

- Transparency Master: Society's Idealized Body Types
- Student Worksheet: Fast Food Survival Guide for Teens
- Student Worksheet: CDC Growth Charts for Boys
- Student Worksheet: CDC Growth Charts for Girls
- Food Models, 1994 version, National Dairy Council
- Poster: Food Guide Pyramid, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Realia

- Pencils or pens
- Transparency
- Nutrition information from fast food restaurants and/or local restaurants
- Pictures of models and body builders from magazines (Optional)

Time: 45 minutes

Lesson Procedure

Introduction: 2 minutes

Connect this lesson on maintaining a healthy body image with the previous lesson on nutritional claims on food packages.

1. Ask the students:

*What are some of the nutritional claims that advertisers use to sell their foods?
[lowfat, no cholesterol, sugar-free, etc.]*

When you looked at food packages at home, what did you notice?

Why do you think people are so preoccupied with what they eat?

Call on students to share their ideas.

2. Tell the students:

Today, we are going to focus on one of the reasons people are concerned about what they eat—they want to look good!

Activity 1: 8 minutes

Describe the variety of body types that people have.

1. Ask the students:

Who are some famous people 7th/8th graders might like to look like?

Call on a few students to share their ideas.

2. Show the pictures of some currently popular models and body builders if you have any. Show the transparency, Society's Idealized Body Types. Ask the students:

- *Why do you think many people think they should look like these pictures?
[People are influenced by advertising, movies, magazines, famous people, etc.]*
- *How many of the people you know personally look like this?*
- *Do you think these figures are realistic? Why or why not?*
- *What might a person do if he or she really believed he or she had to look like this? [A person might try fad diets, choose unhealthy eating patterns, exercise in unhealthy ways, etc.]*

3. Explain:

In the human population, there is a broad range of normal body types and body frame sizes. Some individuals have bodies which appear long and lean; others have bodies which are rounder in appearance; some bodies appear rectangular and muscular. Most of us have some combination of these traits. Some of us have a small body frame; others have a medium or large body frame. How much we weigh and how we look depend, in part, on these genetic factors.

Teacher’s Note: If necessary, remind students that how much people weigh and how they look are sensitive issues. At middle school age, students may feel self-conscious about their appearance and food choices. As they discuss this important topic, it is important to be respectful of one another’s ideas and opinions while encouraging one another in positive ways to choose foods which help them maintain and/or improve their health.

Activity 2: 12 minutes

Discuss the factors that determine body weight.

1. Tell the students:

Many people are preoccupied with their weight. You probably hear “How much do you weigh?” and “I want to lose weight,” or “I want to gain weight,” nearly every day. Some people just want to maintain their current weight. With all this talk about weight, you are probably wondering how much you should weigh.

2. Ask the students to list factors that affect how much a person weighs. Record their ideas on the board. Be sure the following ideas are included:
 - **Age**—Babies weigh around seven or eight pounds when they are born. Throughout life, individuals gain weight, but the rate of weight gain slows after puberty is finished.
 - **Gender**—Males tend to weigh more than females because they have denser bones and greater muscle mass.
 - **Growth Spurts**—As young people grow during puberty, they gain weight. They may go through a time when they eat a lot and store extra fat, but that fat is soon gone when they gain height. This is normal weight gain.
 - **Height**—The taller people are, the more they tend to weigh.
 - **Genetics**—Some people inherit a tendency toward thinness; others inherit a tendency toward roundness.
 - **Body Type and Frame**—Some body types tend to carry more weight than others. People with a small frame will weigh less than people with a large frame. In the human population, there is a broad range of normal body types and body frame sizes.
 - **Food Intake**—The amount of food eaten affects how many calories are taken into the body. If too few calories are eaten, a person uses up stored fat and loses weight; if too many calories are eaten, a person stores fat and gains weight.
 - **Activity Level**—Sedentary people do not need to eat as many calories as active people to maintain their weight. Increasing activity level is a healthy way to tone the body and to lose weight. If more calories are eaten than can be burned up, the person stores fat and gains weight. If a person has been exercising and is adding muscle, he or she may gain weight. This happens because muscle tissue weighs more than fat.

Teacher's Note: Physical activity plays an important role in weight management. People who diet, but do not exercise often lose lean body mass as well as fat. When weight is lost through a combination of diet and exercise, significantly more fat is lost.

3. Ask the students:

Let's pretend there are two students in the class who are the same height. Should they weigh the same amount? [No] If one weighs twenty pounds more than the other, is he or she fat? [No, not necessarily] Why not? [No two people are alike, so they don't need to weigh the same to be healthy. If both are within the weight guidelines, are fit, and don't have health problems related to fat, they are at a healthy weight.]

4. Distribute the Student Worksheets, CDC Growth Charts. Give each student the chart that is appropriate for his or her gender.
 - Boys, 2 to 20 years: Weight-for-age percentiles and Body mass index-for-age percentiles
 - Girls 2 to 20 years: Weight-for-age percentiles and Body mass index-for-age percentiles
5. Ask the students to note the wide range of weights that are considered healthy. Emphasize that this range allows for individual differences.
6. Tell the students:

Being consumed with how much you weigh isn't necessarily healthy. While you can't change your body type or frame size, you can be sure you are getting enough exercise and eating appropriate amounts of foods from the Five Food Groups. Your level of health and fitness is more important than your weight.

Being overly concerned with how much you weigh can be a problem and can lead to unhealthy eating patterns. If you are concerned about your weight, talk to a parent, other trusted adult, health professional, or counselor.

Teacher's Note: Encourage the students to weigh themselves and graph their weight on the growth chart every three months. Also suggest that they compute their body mass index, record it on the growth chart and graph it on the growth chart every three months.

Activity 3: 20 minutes

Generate guidelines for eating nutritious foods in a fast-paced society.

1. Tell the students:

Maintaining a healthy weight can be a challenge in the fast-paced world in which we live. Let's do an informal poll to see what some of our eating patterns are like. Hold up a finger for each time I describe you.

- *If you usually don't have time to eat breakfast, put one finger up.*
- *If you have forgotten your lunch, forgotten your lunch money, or skipped lunch in the last month, put another finger up.*

- *If you eat at a fast food restaurant once a week, add one finger.*
- *If you eat high-fat food at a fast food restaurant more than once a week, add two fingers.*
- *If you grab easy-to-make food for your snacks, without thinking about its nutrient content, put up a finger.*
- *If you usually go all day without eating a vegetable, add a finger.*
- *Add another finger if you usually go without eating fruit each day.*

Now, everyone hold your hands up in the air and let's see what our eating patterns are like in this class.

Wow! It looks like we could improve some of our eating habits.

2. Divide the class into the same number of groups as there are information sheets for fast food restaurants.

Teacher's Note: If your community has several fast food restaurants, have the students vote on their six favorites and have six groups. If your community does not have many fast food restaurants, more than one group can work with the same restaurant's nutrition information.

If your community does not have any fast food establishments, choose one of the following options:

- Obtain menus from local restaurants and use food models to have the students plan balanced meals and snacks.
- Write to fast food restaurant franchises for information ahead of time. Your students are likely to eat at these restaurants at one time or another.
- Use the nutritional information from the fast food restaurants' web sites. The web site addresses are listed in the Introduction to this module.

3. Assign the group roles: leader, spokesperson, recorder. Explain:
 - The leader will help the small group stay working on the task.
 - The spokesperson will share the small group's ideas with the class.
 - The recorder will write the ideas generated by the small group.
4. Distribute the Student Worksheet, Fast Food Survival Guide for Teens, to each student and one additional copy to each group's recorder. Explain:

Each small group is going to create a Fast Food Survival Guide for Teens to share with the class. You will use the nutrition information for your assigned fast food restaurant to complete the worksheet. You may use the food models and the Food Guide Pyramid poster for additional information. Your recorder will make the group's official copy, but each member of the group should also make a copy to take home for future use.

Tomorrow, your group will present a brief report on what you discovered. You will have fifteen minutes to work today.

5. After fifteen minutes, collect the group worksheet from each group's recorder so that you can check the recommendations, make comments, and return them the next day.

Closure: 3 minutes

- Summarize by asking the students:

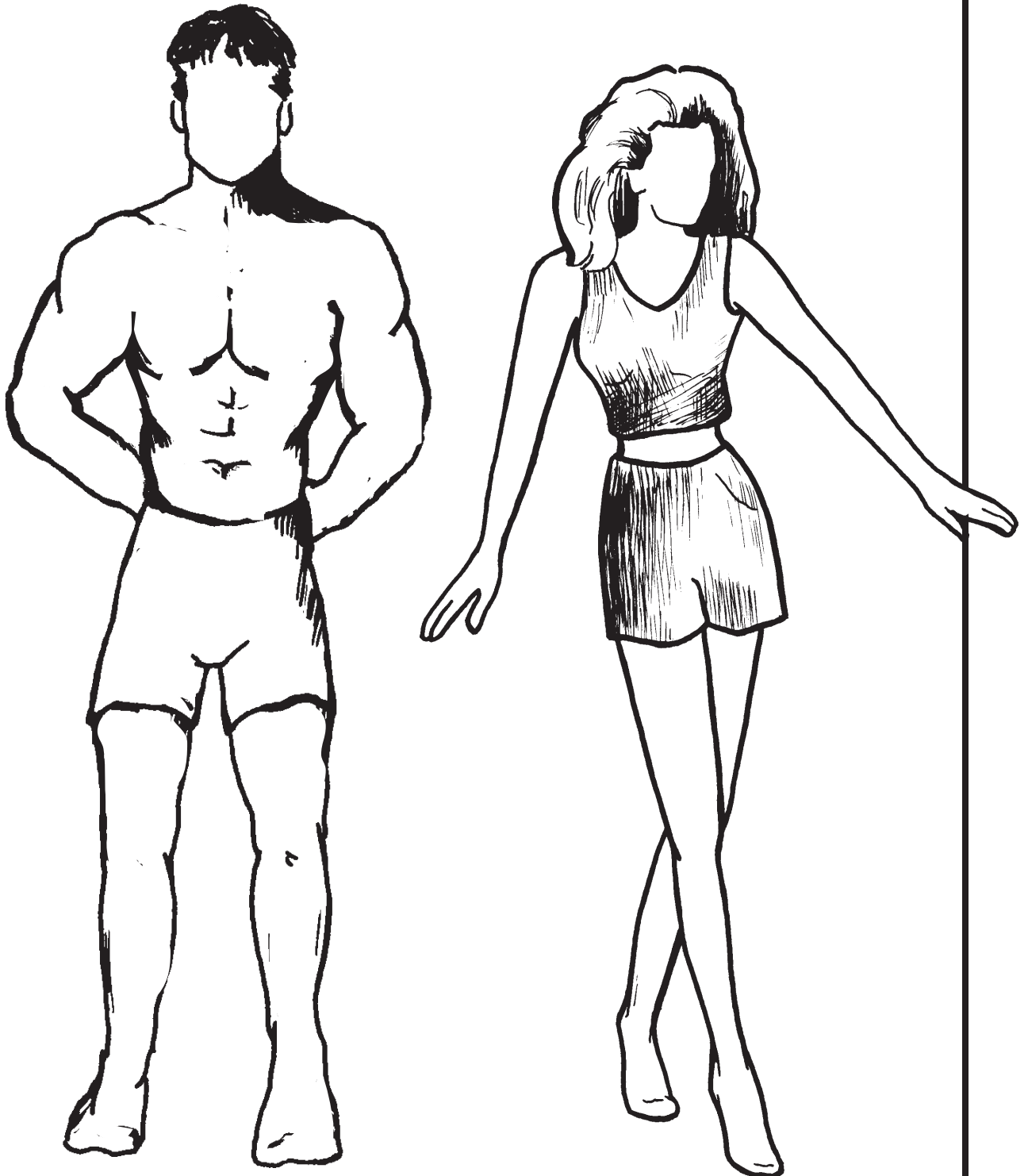
Why do weight tables give a range for healthy weights? [Since no two people are exactly alike, healthy people who are the same height will weigh different amounts.]

Each of you is unique and special. It is important to appreciate your unique body and keep it healthy and fit.

- Redistribute the Student Worksheet, Understanding Food Package Terms (from Lesson 5), for the students to take home and share with their families.
- Tell the students:

During our next health class, we will hear how to survive the fast food lifestyle.

SOCIETY'S IDEALIZED BODY TYPES



Fast Food Survival Guide for Teens

Directions: Use the nutrition information from the fast food restaurant, the Food Guide Pyramid poster, and the food models to create a Fast Food Survival Guide for Teens.

The name of our assigned restaurant is

Read the nutrition information and suggest the foods that could be eaten for lunch and dinner. Choose foods that are nutrient dense, low in fat, and have a moderate amount of calories. List two sample lunches or dinners.

Meal A:

Meal B:

Are all five of the food groups available at this restaurant? If a person eats a meal at this restaurant, what foods should be eaten at home to balance his or her daily diet? Suggest five foods that will need to be eaten at home.

If a person is trying to lose a few pounds, which foods (in addition to exercise) would you recommend?

If a person is trying to gain a few pounds, which foods (in addition to exercise) would you recommend?

If a person stopped for a snack, which nutrient-dense foods would be a good choice?