



A Series: Changing Our Thoughts & Attitudes About Weight

Weight bias and stigma is everywhere! It comes up in entertainment, social media, and in our daily talks with friends, co-workers and strangers. It is a serious challenge for youth whose body size is different from what society tells us is 'normal.'

We will be talking about this topic in the next three issues:

1. What is weight bias? And how should I communicate with my child about weight?
2. How do I support my child if they experience weight bias from their friends?
3. How do I speak up for my child in a world where weight bias & stigma is common?

Let's get started!

What is weight bias? And how should I communicate with my child about weight?

Dr. Rebecca Puhl, a psychologist with the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, says that weight-based stigmatization is a 'negative weight-related attitude, [created] through stereotypes, bias, rejection and prejudice towards children and adolescents because they are overweight or obese.' Researchers have linked weight related teasing to feeling unhappy about our bodies, low self-esteem, unhealthy eating, and mental health challenges. Research also shows that when parents focus on weight, many of these negative outcomes also occur. Dr. Puhl notes that children often feel pressure to be thin. She says that it is important to focus on health instead of weight and trying to be thin.

What should I not say when talking to my child about their body? Words that focus on the child's body shape or size:

- Weight
- Large
- Big
- Obese
- Fat

What should I say to my child if I am concerned about their body size?

- Ask your child what language they are 'ok' with
- Focus on healthy behaviour:
 - ◊ Praise your child for making healthy choices, no matter how small they may be. For example, say 'I'm proud of you for choosing to eat carrot sticks for a snack, I know that's not easy'
 - ◊ Help your child to take part in activities they like. For example, say 'I saw your friend playing hockey in the street, why don't you go join him?'
 - ◊ Help your child pay attention to when they are hungry. For example, say 'I know you still feel hungry right now, but let's wait 20 minutes for the food to settle. If you are still hungry after that, you can have more'.
- Talk about healthy bodies being all different shapes and sizes. For example, point out the fact that pictures in magazines are edited.
- Make sure your child knows you love them no matter what they look like. For example, say 'I love you just the way you are'.



Healthy Bites, p.2

Are You Getting Enough ZZZZZs?

As we leave the summer behind and the new school year begins you may be working on getting back into a regular sleep routine. There are many things that can interfere with a good night's sleep — stress, family, work, health issues, and unexpected challenges. At Shapedown BC we get this question all the time “How can I improve my sleep?”



If sleep is a problem for you try tweaking some of your sleep habits. Here are a few helpful ways to manage sleep in the summertime for your kids and yourself:

- 1. Power Down**
Tip: Turn off TVs, computers, tablets, YouTube and other blue-light sources an hour before you go to bed.
 - 2. Routine**
Tip: Stick to the same bedtime and wake up time, even on the weekends. This helps to regulate your body's clock and could help you fall asleep and stay asleep for the night.
 - 3. Cut out Napping**
Tip: Feeling tired in the afternoon? Try a short walk, a glass of ice water, or a phone call with a friend.
 - 4. Move your body – a tired body sleeps better**
Tip: Regular physical activity can promote better sleep. Avoid being active too close to bedtime, however.
 - 5. Wind down.**
Tip: Your body needs time to shift into sleep mode, so spend the last hour before bed doing a calming activity such as reading.
 - 6. White Noise – Helpful for adults and children**
Tip: Use a fan, an air conditioner, or a white noise app or machine. You can also try ear plugs.
- Keys to Success:**
Start Small - Making small changes can have a large impact on your sleep.
Be Consistent - Pick a strategy and use it consistently

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Active Families

Does the thought of exercise make you tired? Does it feel like work? Does it give you freedom to eat certain foods?

It's time to shift the way we think about being active and this quote is a great place to start...

“Exercise is a celebration of what your body can do. Not a punishment for what you ate.”

~ Women's Health UK





CRISPY BAKED BUTTERNUT SQUASH FRIES



Ingredients:

- 1 butternut squash peeled & cut into (approx. 1/2" x 4") match-sticks
- 1/4c vegetable oil
- salt & pepper

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper (for easier flipping and cleanup).
2. In a large bowl, toss butternut squash with oil. Arrange fries on baking sheets, making sure that none are overlapping. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
3. Bake (use convection, if you have it) for 30 minutes, or until caramelized and charred in spots. flipping once halfway through.

Recipe from Foodess: <https://foodess.com/crispy-baked-butternut-fries/>

Managing cravings: 3 helpful tips

Here are some helpful tips for dealing with food cravings or riding out the "crave wave"



Thirst First

- ◆ Ask yourself "Are you really hungry or are you actually thirsty?"
- ◆ If food isn't satisfying your craving have a glass of water—that may do the trick!
- ◆ Keep water handy

Practice Mindful Eating

- ◆ Be present while you eat
- ◆ Eat slowly and without distraction
- ◆ Listen to physical hunger cues and eating only until you're full
- ◆ Eat to maintain overall health and well-being
- ◆ Appreciating your food



Plan your meals:

- ◆ Plan for a few days or a week
- ◆ Have foods ready to go at home (washed and cut up)
- ◆ Involve other family members with dinner ideas and food prep (this help can reduce picky eating)

Research Corner:

The Centre for Healthy Weights: Shapedown BC team at BC Children's Hospital is partnering with a research study called: *Aim2Be*. *Aim2Be* is a healthy living app geared for children and youth ages 10-17 years old and their parents. If you are graduate of the Shapedown BC program at BC Children's Hospital and interested in participating visit this link <https://aim2be.ca/> or email jill.mcdowell@cw.bc.ca



If you attended Shapedown BC at another location we will keep you posted when this app goes live!