

GirlFormation

This month's theme of mind, body and spirit

has been inspired by GirlFormation's upcoming Girl's Health Conference. On Saturday, November 17th, 2007, we will be hosting a Girl's Health Conference at the Village by the Sea Conference Center in Wells, Maine. The conference invites girls ages 12-14 and an adult woman in their lives to attend the day long event from 9 AM- 3PM. The conference will provide age appropriate educational workshops and activities in the areas of physical development, mental health and spiritual well being.

We are very excited to have key note speaker, Representative Dawn Hill, talking with the group about the importance of civic involvement and volunteering time and the benefits that come from being in a leadership role.



Lunch is provided as part of the conference with no cost to participants. In fact, the conference is free as well! GirlFormation, with the generous underwriting from the Morton Foundation, is funding the entire event. This kind of holistic education with direct focus on girls' health in a setting with girls and a significant woman in their lives seems to be displaced in many public school settings, so we would like to provide this educational experience in an open community setting. Participation in The Girl's Health Conference is on a first come basis, and we will stop accepting registrations at seventy participants. If you would like to sign up, please visit our website www.girlformation.com If you don't live in the York County area or the spots are filled, we've provided a taste of some of the information that will be presented in this edition of GirlFormation.



Body Image Camp

On Saturday August 4th and Sunday August 5th six girls ages 11-13 gathered at Breakwater Bookland in Rockland Maine to participate in GirlFormation's Body Image Camp. Under the direction of certified teacher Carolyn Charpentier and registered nurse Kathleen Hastings, the group completed various activities surrounding positive and negative messages about body image. The group also identified and analyzed some of the sources of these messages such as media, peers, family and self perception. The Body Image Camp curriculum also included the introduction of relaxation techniques to assist today's girls in handling some of the stress in their lives. Some of the activities described are all from the weekend's work.

continued on inside fold-out

These are posters that show positive and negative media images found in today's magazines targeted at teenage girls. Look inside to view the inspirational and powerful work done by Maine girls at our Body Image Camp in Rockland on August 4th and 5th.



Each workshop will have a 20 minute presentation by a specialist in the field, and will be followed up with a 15 minutes question/answer session for audience participation. At the conference, Linda Zeigler, RN, will be presenting information about physical changes girls may be experiencing as they become teenagers. Licensed Esthetician, Rhonda Nordstrom, will be discussing changes that are occurring in girls' skin as they develop as well as recommended skin care regimes. Rhonda will also model some simple make up techniques to assist girls who may be interested in how to put make up on so it looks natural. A.C.E. Certified Personal Trainer, Cindy Charlson, will be presenting on how to balance a healthy diet and adequate exercise in their busy tween/teenage lives. Licensed Clinical Practicing Counselor, WendellAnne Augunas, will be talking about common stresses that girls may be experiencing in their lives as well as some healthy coping strategies to help handle the stress.

Fat Means

Skinny Means

This activity is used to introduce participants to some of the stereotypes and assumptions that can be made surrounding overweight and underweight people. Girls brainstorm a list of words they associate with “fat” and “skinny”. Once the list is created, girls are paired off to write a story using as many of the words as possible to describe what they think “Fat Means...” and “Skinny Means...” The brainstormed list of words and some of the girls’ stories are can be found here.



Fat Means...

- Big
- Overweight
- Large
- No one on tv
- Not healthy
- Eats a lot
- Heavy
- Not fragile
- Strong
- Emotional eating
- Jokes
- Sad
- Lazy
- Diet
- Depressed
- Unpopular
- Eats junkfood

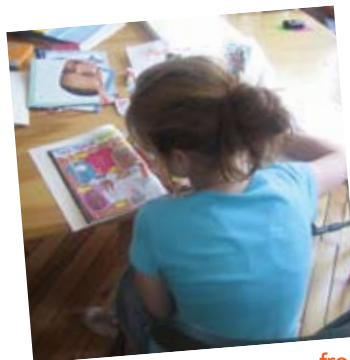
Skinny Means....

- thin
- small
- light
- frail
- little
- pretty
- healthy
- underweight
- beautiful
- happy
- successful
- celebrities
- friends
- boys
- love
- hour glass figure
- what everyone wants to be

Skinny Versions:

Hi. I am Brooke. I love my love life. I am popular and skinny. I have the coolest boyfriend. He is the captain of the football team, and I am head cheerleader. My locker is next to a bunch of nerds who mean actually nothing to me. One day I told the nerds to lose weight, but they’ll never ever have a chance to look like me, beautiful, pretty and the perfect weight. One day I heard Carrie Underwood was coming, and she gave a speech about looks. They aren’t everything. My look isn’t the only look. Right then I realized I was a horrible person and should be ashamed. I apologized.

Written by Emma and Amy



Alie was skinny all her life. Underweight, small, frail—she never felt good about herself even though she was in the “in” crowd. She felt if she wanted to stay with the popular crowd she had to act mean and different then she was. They always teased the overweight and different people. One day she just drifted away from the popular people and got nicer friends. She didn’t care what they looked like and vice-versa.

Written by Veronica and Betsy

I was the most popular girl ever in school because I was underweight and looked beautiful. The boys liked the way I looked and loved me for my shape. Sometimes it was hard because my body was so little so I had to be careful. I wanted to be healthy and look perfect. But the kind of healthy I wanted to be wasn’t healthy at all. As I started not to care about my figure, I could really relax without having to worry about what I ate. People started to like me for my personality and not how I looked. I was happy with the way I looked.

Written by Jessica and Christina

Fat Versions:

Kate was sick of people’s teasing. Every time she walked past thin, popular girls and guys the would sneer and tell her to diet. Her mother told her not to listen to them, but it was too much. She couldn’t take another day of it. So for a long time she dieted and finally was thin. She walked up to the popular girls but they still didn’t accept her. Then it hit her. True friends didn’t care about what you look like, just what was in your heart. She decided that being herself would get her even further in life. She also decided not to listen to people’s cruel taunts.

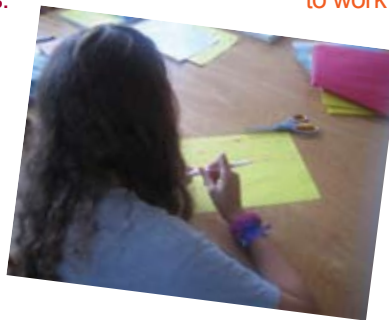
Written by Betsy and Veronica

It was the first day of school, and I was nervous. I was overweight and everyone would look at me and makes joke. None of the boys liked me. I was very unpopular, so when I would come home

from school I would emotional eat. I would eat junk and I was lazy. I was sad because I wanted to be perfect like all the popular girls. I was not popular but that made me even more sad. I started to work out and I started to eat

healthy. As I started to work out and the right food I was a good size. I made lots of friends that are happy that we’re all healthy.

Written by Christina and Jessica



Hi, I’m Zoe. Right now I am on my bed eating and trying to ignore my new diet. Everybody at school is skinny why can’t I be? “Zoe, it’s time for school! Do I have to go to school? Yes, why don’t you like school?” “Just because. There’s the bus, got to go.” At school, I was at my locker getting my books when all of a sudden the most popular girls in school came up to me, and said “Why are you overweight? All day I bet you just eat junk food. You will never be on tv like me. When I got home from school that day my mom was worried about me. So we went into the living room and talked. When I came out she told me to ignore them and stay strong. Now I live a happy life as a strong person.

Written by Emma & Amy

Dear Carol...

The Dear Carol questions present specific problems that today's girls confront on a daily basis. For this activity, girls were paired up and given a Dear Carol question, and then the pairs offered advice in a written response. The Dear Carol questions and written responses can be found below.

Dear Carol,

I am a 14 year old girl who lives in a small town. I've had the same friends for my whole life. We've been friends since we were babies. We began high school this past September and everything has changed since we started. We used to have fun just playing basketball, taking walks through the woods, taking day trips into the city and just having sleepovers and watching movies. Ever since we began high school everything has changed. All my friends are obsessed with boys, and staying skinny. My best friend only eats once a day; she eats dinner with her parents so they won't worry about her. I have another friend who goes on the web and finds websites that tell girls how to lose weight. They track what they eat and are constantly talking about losing weight. They are all obsessed with being size 0 and weighing themselves everyday. They wear clothes that they would never have worn before, short skirts and tight shirts. They say that they want to impress the boys. They've left me out of activities because I don't want to diet or talk about boys all the time. I know they think I'm fat; even though I know I am not fat, I begin to doubt myself. Should I just try to lose a few pounds to fit in? I'm worried about my friends and I don't know what to do. What happened to my buddies? And will they ever be the same?

Sincerely,
Troubled Teen in Tennessee

Dear Troubled Teen in Tennessee,

No, you should not lose weight to fit in. You should talk to your buddies, and ask why they have changed. Only you can figure out if they will

ever be the same by talking to them and figuring out their feelings. A lot of girls in this world are trying to lose weight too, but that doesn't mean you should. Your friends are probably going through a tough time in their home life so they want all the attention they can get. If they don't stop, you should tell them the dangers of not eating. If they don't listen, tell a trusted adult. Ignore them if they say you were a tattler. You can say you were just trying to help them, and that they will appreciate and thank you one day. Deep down they know they are perfect just the way they are. And stick thin isn't the only look. Thank you and remember you can make a difference.

Written by Emma and Amy

Dear Carol,

I need a lot of help. I don't know what to do! I am 16 years old and have a real problem. I began a diet about 6 months ago and I feel like it's out of control. I began the diet just hoping to lose 10 pounds. I used a healthy approach at first; I did research on the internet and found diets that promoted healthy eating. I am a runner as well and began to run more, knowing that this would help me lose the 10 pounds. Surprisingly enough the 10 pounds just dropped off my body. It took no time at all. I couldn't believe it. All of a sudden everyone was telling me how wonderful I looked, even my family. They would say I looked healthy and happy. And I did. But then I began to get obsessed. I started to weigh myself once a day and then twice a day and so on and so forth. If the scale went up even an ounce I would not eat for the rest of the day. Weight really began to drop off. After a while I began to feel drowsy and dizzy, my clothes were falling off me. My mother was on my back constantly about gaining weight. Everyone told me I looked too skinny, that I looked sick. I couldn't understand it; I thought skinny looked good. And as much as I tried to stop I couldn't. I finally felt in control of my life. One day, I fainted at school. That is when my mom made me go

to the therapist. They would weigh me everyday but I would stuff small things in my pockets like weights in order to tip the scale up. I feel awful that I am lying. I feel awful because I can't stop dieting. I just lie to everyone, even the therapist. What do I do? Am I an addict? Can there be such a thing as an addict to losing weight? Will I die? I'm so scared. Everyone at school is talking about me, people are scared to talk to me and I even heard someone say that they thought I might have cancer. I hate my life.

Sincerely,
Hopelessly Skinny in Boston

Dear Hopelessly Skinny,

That is a big problem that you have. The solutions to help are:

- Talk to your guidance counselor because they can help you.
- Make a plan with your nurse about what to eat and when.
- If you feel peer pressure from your friends, confront them and be honest.
- Also, you should talk to your parents and tell them how you feel inside.
- If you have a therapist, talk about your weight addiction.

Please tell the truth-especially when it's a problem as big and as serious like this. Be honest and not put things in your pocket because they will find out sooner or later.

Written by Betsy and Veronica

www.GirlFormation.com

visit www.girlformation.com to view newsletters, copy & paste articles, sign up to receive GirlFormation free of charge, sign up for future Body Image Camps or to sign up for the Girls' Health Conference.



Mission

The goal of this publication is to effectively create a girls' network to:

- give Maine girls an opportunity to express themselves to other girls
- provide a way of promoting girls' events and opportunities
- inform educators, parents, and others about ways to support girls
- aid in the cross-fertilization of successful programs
- create a network of women working with and supporting each other's efforts.

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Funder

GirlFormation is made possible through the generous funding of The Morton Foundation.

Affirmation Boxes:

As a final project, girls painted wooden boxes with a variety of colors and designs that reflected their individual inner selves. These boxes were called "affirmation boxes" because before customizing their boxes, girls wrote down five positive traits they liked about themselves on individual slips of paper. After the paint dried, girls placed these positive thoughts (or affirmations) into the boxes. Whenever the girls feel down or stressed out, they can reach in the box, and take out a positive thought to read about themselves. These affirmations can be changed or added to as time goes on and girls develop new things they like about themselves. Please enjoy the images of the affirmation boxes below.



Quotes from Girls who Participated in August Body Image Camp

What did you like about the Body Image Camp?

"I liked being able to say whatever I wanted to. I liked how everything anyone says stayed in the circle. I liked all the crafts we did too. Girls Circle was very fun. I would do it again tomorrow!"

"That I could meet girls around my age and learn about body feelings/information."

"I like how everything is completely private and I like the activities."

What did you learn from participating in the Body Image Camp?

"Really skinny isn't the way to live."

"I learned that we are not perfect and that we can like who we are just the way we are. I like who I am and I'm not worried for the perfect look for my body."

"I learned that it is okay to look different. I have become more comfortable with my body."

"That no matter what, you should love yourself."

Future Body Image Camp Dates:

**Saturday September 29th
& Sunday September 30th
in Waldoboro, Maine**

**Saturday December 8th
& Sunday December 9th
in Fryeburg area**

**Look on page 3 or online at:
www.girlformation.com
for more detailed information!**

Body Image Camp

Two Body Image camps will be running this fall. The first camp will take place on Saturday September 29th & Sunday September 30th in Waldoboro, Maine. The second Body Image Camp will run on Saturday, December 8th and Sunday December 9th in the Fryeburg area. The camps run from 10 AM-3PM on both days, and transportation is not provided.

Each day the group of 6-10 girls, ranging in age from 12-14, will meet with facilitators, Kathleen Hastings, RN, social worker Christina Francis, LCSW, and Carrie Charpentier, certified elementary teacher, to discuss themes pertaining to positive and negative images that society and culture have created in respect to women's bodies.

The Body Image Camp is free to participants and there are a limited number of available spaces filled on a first come, first serve basis. Both days a catered lunch will be available to participants. After attending both seminar days, participants will receive a \$100 gift card to Target and families will receive a \$50 gas card to reimburse travel expenses. If you would like to participate in one of the two Body Image Camps, please register at our website: www.girlformation.com, and indicate if you are interested in the September camp or the December camp.



Here are some posters created during Girlformation's August 4th & August 5th Body Image Camp in Rockland Maine. Looking at current girls' magazines, participants clipped out images that demonstrated both positive messages and negative messages to girls.

Beyond Bully Prevention: Strategies that Work Conference

Monday, November 5th, 2007
Eastland Park Hotel, Portland Maine

From cyber-bullying to bias-based harassment of LGBTQ youth, to effects of stereotypical masculinity on boys' academic performance—this conference is designed for teachers, school counselors, school social workers, administrators, and all adults who work with youth. The conference will tackle issues underpinning school-based bullying and harassment and will address strategies that work.

For more information, please call Jackie at 207-861-8131.

Girls' Health Conference

Saturday, November 17, 2007
8:45 AM- 3:15 PM • Village by the Sea Conference Center, Wells ME

Girlformation is hosting a Girls' Health Conference appropriate for girls ages 9-12. Doctors and other health professionals will be speaking on health issues that girls face today in the areas of puberty, dermatology, nutrition, exercise and mental health. A brief question and answer session will follow each speaker. Girls are asked to attend the conference with a female in their lives, such as mother, aunt, grandmother.

Pre-registration is encouraged, and you can now register by visiting our website, www.girlformation.com.

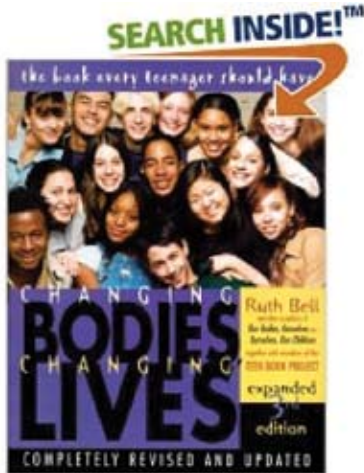


Adventure Girls

You are invited to join the Adventure Girls this fall as they go kayaking, horseback riding, and many other fabulous adventures! All girls in 2nd to 6th grade are welcome to join us monthly for our adventures. For more information, please call Jackie at 207-861-8131.

Resources and Book Reviews!

Book Review



Changing Bodies, Changing Lives, by Ruth Bell and the co-authors of **Our Bodies, Ourselves and Ourselves and Our Children**, together with members of the **Teen Book Project**.

A quick summary of this book may be difficult, because it is chock full of a wealth of information. This book works best as a resource, or even a dictionary, if needed. It's not really a "fun read", so I wouldn't recommend expecting to read it cover to cover. Parents may find themselves referring to the book for quick reviews or questions. Teens may find it a great book for frequently asked questions because this is just the kind of book a young person can use to access information quickly. The chapters cover everything from physical health and emotional health to eating disorders and substance abuse. Each subject has thorough descriptions and pictures, as well as, many personal stories, poems and writings, written for teens and by teens. Chapters end with a list of resources, agencies and websites that can further direct a person for more information on the subject. The only complaint I received as I reviewed this book with my young babysitter, was that the pictures are a little outdated, which I have to agree they are. However, the information is accurate and up-to-date, and the outdated pictures add a little humor to the book.

Book Review written by Kathleen Hastings.

MAINE AUTHOR ALERT!

Buried

Written by Robin Merrow MacCreedy

Published by Dutton Books, an imprint of Penguin Putnam

How deep do you dig to bury your past?

Claudine has long buried her own needs and dreams to cover for her alcoholic mother. She protects herself with careful planning and constant control. Order is her weapon.

How deep do you dig to uncover the truth?

After Mom suddenly disappears—another alcoholic binge?—and seventeen year old Claudine finds herself all alone, a much darker reality emerges from beneath years of angry denial and enabling behavior. And as the truth comes closer to the surface, Claudine must dig for the answers she's always worked so hard to cover up.



A suspenseful and mind twisting psychological thriller, *Buried* is about drama and destruction of codependency and the redemptive power of secrets revealed.

Source: Book Cover

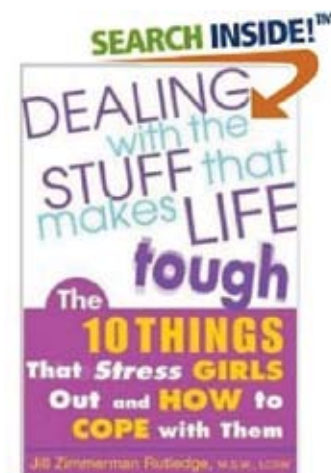
Author of *Buried*, Robin Merrow MacCreedy lives on the Maine coast with her husband, two children and her dog. *Buried* can be purchased at Barnes & Noble, Border or online at www.amazon.com. *Buried* won the 2007 Edgar Award for Best Young Adult Novel.

Dealing with the Stuff that Makes Life Tough: The 10 Things that Stress Girls Out and How to Cope with Them

Written by Jill Zimmerman Rutledge, M.S.W., LCSW 2004, McGraw Hill Publishing: Contemporary Books

This book is written as a resource to help girls find ways to calm down and cope with the various stresses that can occur in their lives. Each of the ten chapter identifies different circumstances that can bring on stress for today's teenage girls. The chapters are as follows:

1. "If Everyone Says I Look Fine, Why do I feel so Fat?"- *Making Peace with Body Image*
2. High Anxiety-Panic Attacks and Other Frightening Fears
3. The Sun Through the Clouds- *When you Feel Down*
4. Venus to Mars- *Dealing with Guys*
5. Not "Just Saying 'No'"- *Smoking, Drinking, Drugs*
6. Fresh Air- *Taking Back Your Overscheduled Life*
7. Picking up the Piece- *When your Parents' Divorce Shatters Your Life as You Know It*
8. Mr. Sandman, Bring Me a Dream- *Getting to Sleep When You Can't*
9. Enough Already!- *Bullies and So-Called Friends*
10. When Your Crush is a Girl- *Lesbian Teens*



Within each chapter the author, Jill Zimmerman Rutledge, M.S.W., LCSW, shares the stories of three girls and how they handled the stresses identified. Along with the girls' stories, the author identifies healthy techniques for girls to use to calm down and cope with the stress. This

book can be a great resource for girls to keep on their shelves and take down and review chapters based on what they're experiencing as there is a degree of stress in everyone's lives. This book is directed at teaching girls how to handle stress effectively so they can feel centered, in control and confident.

Book Review written by Carolyn Charpentier

Ask Kat: a place to get answers to your questions!



Submit confidential questions to GirlFormation and Kat will get you accurate and helpful answers and information!

Now available online at GirlFormation.com!

exposed to a sexually transmitted disease. Pap smears should be done annually after the age of eighteen, or younger if the teenage girl is sexually active.

Ask Kat, What are some good relaxation/coping techniques I can use to help me unwind?

Signed, Nervous Nelly.

Dear Nelly:

Since we know stress is related to many health problems, it will only benefit you to find some positive, healthy ways for handling stress. There are many health benefits, as well as stress reduction benefits to exercise and physical activity. The activity doesn't necessarily have to be a competitive sport, however; if you find yourself drawn to athletics and sports groups, then explore this interest. The exercise could be a single person activity, such as, walking, biking, hiking. There are even group related activities, like, yoga/meditation, pilates, and dance classes.

Besides physical activity, sometimes tapping into our inner voice and expressing that part of ourselves in a creative way, can be a great stress reliever, as well. Some young women find positive outlets in keeping journals, writing poetry, song writing, or reading. Another form of creative expression, which is also a great stress management tool, is found in the arts. Learn to play an instrument, sing, paint, dance or try out for a play. Finding a hobby, perhaps in the arts in crafts area, like knitting, weaving, and sewing, are all other wonderful ways, to not only learn a new talent, but also to balance our stress levels. Finally, there are specific relaxation exercises that can help us learn to quiet our minds and let go. These exercises are often referred to as visualizations, guided imagery and affirmations. These relaxation techniques are usually either read to us by someone else on a script, or played on a tape/C.D., or repeated quietly in our minds, by our own voice.

Each individual will find that some of these suggestions may work well for them

and other recommendations may not be as effective. It is important to expose yourself to different stress management techniques and find what works for you. Most of these activities, hobbies and exercises are also extremely safe and inexpensive, allowing any teenaged girl to try a number of these experiences. This will not only benefit young girls now, but throughout their lifetime.

Ask Kat, I am getting really bad breakouts now and I want my skin to clear up for the new school year, what can I do?

Signed, Face in need of First Aide.

Dear First Aide Face:

According to Rhonda Nordstrom, licensed esthetician, and owner of Nordstrom Skin Care Studio in Rockland, healthy skin is created by what we put inside our bodies, as well as, what we use on the outside. Even though adolescence is a common time for girls to experience skin changes, especially as they are experiencing so many hormonal and physical changes, a certain amount of our skin appearance is going to be determined by genetics. However, there are some things teens can do, according to Rhonda, regular cleansing and moisturizing is an important preventative measure, as well as, the use of daily sun block and limited sun exposure. Keep in mind that the use of good products, with safe natural ingredients will also benefit skin health. The teen years are also when most girls will begin to experiment with make-up, Rhonda suggests that girls seek the advice of a professional to help learn how to enhance their natural beauty. Rhonda does offer a teen service, called "your first make-up lesson", which is not only an exciting treat to the teen, but also informative to the parents and teen. A licensed esthetician in your area should be qualified to help a teenaged girl with this topic. Also remember, drink more water and less soda, the more whole and natural products/foods we consume and the less "junk" and sugar, the better our skin will look and feel.

Kathleen Hastings is an RN and certified massage therapist who works at Penobscot Bay Medical Center. She lives in Hope with her husband, two children, dog and cat.

Ask Kat, How can I be more involved with my annual physicals? What questions should I ask? When should I expect to have certain exams?

Signed, Health Conscious Consumer.

Dear Consumer:

First you need to decide where to go for your check-up. Do you have a family doctor or pediatrician? If not, look into a local health clinic, community health center, or even a family planning agency. Every developing adolescent should have a physical or well check-up every year. Any question is an appropriate question and you may want to make a list of questions and write them down, prior to your appointment. This way you won't forget.

An annual physical is composed of two parts, the written part, where the doctor or nurse will write down your medical history. The other part is the physical, which may include, height/ weight, blood pressure, urine sample, blood work, general body assessment and even vaccines, if needed. Adolescent girls will also begin to have manual internal exams, to assess the reproductive organs. There should always be a nurse in the room while these exams are being performed. This protects the patient and the doctor. Pap smears are internal exams, where a small swab is taken from the cervix to obtain a sample of cells. The pap smear can determine if there are precancerous or cancerous cells on the cervix, or if the young woman has been

Balancing Nutrition, Exercise and Emotional Health in Adolescent Girls

Written by Kathleen Hastings, RN

Nutrition and exercise are two of the largest contributing factors for prevention of disease and chronic health problems, in this country today. When an individual has good health and feels good, their emotional health is much more balanced as a result. There are many aspects of our health, that when combined in balance, create a whole person, these being the physical/body, the mind/emotions and the spirit/inner voice. Girls should be encouraged to nurture and support all of these aspects of their health. Taking care of oneself, includes eating healthy and exercising, as well as, experiencing emotional balance.

Good nutrition has different meanings to each of us, depending on the eating habits we have already developed. Our society also sends us conflicting messages through T.V., celebrities, and even up-to-date research that changes constantly. This can make it hard to know what is accurate with so much contradictory information. However, one thing that most medical experts will agree on, is that variety in nutrition is good, as well as, moderation.

Unfortunately, many girls in this country eat diets high in sugar, preservatives and fat, as they expose themselves regularly to “junk food”.

Dr. Mary Ashmore, D.O., who sees many adolescent girls in her family practice in Rockport, says that she continues to see girls present at their annual physicals, worried about being fat, as opposed to being concerned about being healthy.

She further comments that very often she will see teen aged girls who skip meals, especially breakfast, with the goal of decreasing their overall calorie intake. However, she continued to explain how this process actually backfires, because if a person doesn't eat by about 10 AM, after fasting all night, this sends the message to the brain and body to go into starvation mode. This process, in turn, will

store anything we do eat as fat, so as to easily access it when needed for energy. Therefore, producing the opposite of the desired result.



Dr. Mary Ashmore

According to Dr. Ashmore, we not only need to make diet changes/choices individually, but also as a society, including our schools. School cafeterias are well known for providing high sugar, high preservative, and high fat foods, to our children and adolescents. Parents and schools need to become involved in demanding more healthy choices for these kids. Also, adolescent girls should be seeing a doctor annually for physicals, this gives her and her doctor the opportunity to observe her overall health picture. Having annual physicals is an important preventative health care measure. The doctor/patient relationship is important, so that if certain “red flags” develop (i.e. major weight loss over the last year), it can be made obvious to the patient and doctor and interventions can begin. Referrals may be made to nutritionists, counselors, physicians, and family members, when imbalances in nutrition impact health.

Another aspect of our whole health, which is good for both our body and our mind is, exercise. Stagnation, or lack of movement, can cause serious health problems and exercise/activity is a great way to keep our mind, body and spirit vibrant and healthy. According to Maine native, Cindy Charlson, A.C.E. certified personal trainer, and owner of Revolutions personal training in Camden, exercise is a great way to balance physical and emotional health.

Adolescent girls who begin an exercise regime will be at less risk for obesity as an adult due to the routine of their regular activity.

Exercising as a teenager encourages a more active lifestyle, throughout the life span. As a person ages, they will develop better health mentally, physically, and spiritually, developing better habits and healthier choices over their lifetime. Cindy shares that one of the benefits of regular exercise, is the overall stress reduction.



Cindy Charlson, A.C.E. certified personal trainer, and owner of Revolutions personal training in Camden

Cindy does see some adolescent girls and young adult women in her private practice. She works with young clients whose needs may range from staying in shape over the summer, for more sports related training, to strengthening of movement, to focusing on the mechanics of movement, to decrease injury risk. Cindy does note that there are some cautions, whenever you are working with a young client. One of these cautions is to monitor any strength training (use of weights), because kids bones are still developing, it is important to make sure the weight is appropriate for the child's strength, without straining. For this reason, it is always important to seek the advice of any certified personal trainer. Cindy also refers to the local YMCA/YWCA as a good local agency to access exercise programs/information for teens and kids.

Emotional balance is a third aspect of our whole health. During adolescence many physical and emotional changes

continued on next page

happen and it's hard to incorporate all these transitions smoothly. According to counselor, Wendellanne Augunas, L.C.P.C., who works with many young women in the mid-coast Maine area, believes it is important to "normalize" that these changes and feelings are o.k. Furthermore, she explained that this awkwardness is exactly what most teens should be feeling and experiencing, this is a normal process in our development.



Wendellanne Augunas, L.C.P.C.

WendellAnne, feels that as a pathology oriented culture we forget that feelings like anxiety and depression are o.k. to experience. The message we get from society is that everyone should feel happy all of the time, and this can send a dangerous message to developing girls and young women. She feels that these feelings can be seen as a good roadmarker, that a young person is listening to that inner voice, and hopefully hearing a little bit of mom and dad's voice, as well. As WendellAnne states, it is better to get to the root of the problem, for example, if a teenager develops anxiety when taking an exam, get to the root of the anxiety rather than trying to cover it up or ignore it.

Rather than being a society that says we should never feel pain or bad feelings, WendellAnne feels our focus needs to be more on building resilience in our young women and start looking at where the expectations are being set, and if they're realistic.

As we have discussed earlier, some ways to help maintain our emotional balance involve getting involved. WendellAnne suggests finding an activity, hobby, sport, part time job,

class or group that offers the adolescent a chance to demonstrate some independence and responsibility, but also encourages their expression and creativity. These are ways that parents can give the tools needed to help their adolescent move toward emotional balance and well being.

Adolescence is a conflicting time, simple questions may be seen as interrogations, parents want to support their kids, but are also struggling with their own anxieties, as their developing child moves toward independence. Teenagers will learn most of their lifelong habits and coping mechanisms from their parents. Therefore, as adults

we have a responsibility in taking care of ourselves, as well. Creating balance in life and experiencing good health is a lifelong process, that we must work to maintain daily. In conclusion, exploring the balance of nutrition, exercise and emotional health are only three areas of health, which impact each other greatly, but the real lesson is in the opportunity we have been given to realize that we can so profoundly change our health, our comfort level and our emotional state all on our own. Hopefully, in learning this, each adolescent will take this opportunity to explore this path and learn what does truly make them a healthy, happy and whole person.

Normal Changes in Puberty for Girls

Written by Kathleen Hastings, RN

When should it start?

Puberty in girls usually starts at any time between 8 and 13 years of age, periods usually start about two years after the start of puberty.

What happens during puberty?

A girl grows and changes in ways that prepare her to be able to have a baby. These changes occur in certain stages.

- The development of breasts, which can take up to five years to reach their final size and shape.
- The growth of hair under the arms and in the pubic area.
- Explosive growth spurt, this is greater now than any other time, except the first year of life.
- The body shape becomes curvier. During this time it is normal to put on weight, especially on the hips/thighs, stomach and breasts.
- Body odor can change, especially under the arms, you may also notice increased perspiration.

- Development of acne on the face and neck.
- Vaginal discharge starts or changes.
- Teenagers experience changes in their emotions and new sexual feelings.
- The beginning of your menstrual cycle or period.

Why do these changes occur?

Natural chemicals that circulate in the body, called sex hormones, cause these changes. At the start of puberty, the brain releases a hormone known as gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH). This causes the release of two more hormones called follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) and leutinizing hormone (LH), into the bloodstream. LH and FSH, in turn, stimulate the ovaries, which contain your eggs, to release the hormone estrogen. Estrogen is responsible for these changes that girls go through during puberty.



Source: www.netdoctor.com May 10, 2005.

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As I've been collecting resources for the November 17th Girls' Health Conference, I came across the book, [The Girls' Book of Wisdom](#). I've been reading through the quotes on a daily basis, and have found "pearls of wisdom." The book breaks down quotes into forty five categories, including Confidence, Speaking Out, Leadership, Spirituality, Family, Friends, Money, Freedom, Happiness and Giving Back. I've selected some of my favorite quotes, and included them below.

"Happiness is a gift. But it cannot be given to you by other people, you give it to yourself.

— Jacqueline Kehoe, age fourteen

"I always preferred having wings to having things."

— Pat Schroeder, Former US Congresswoman

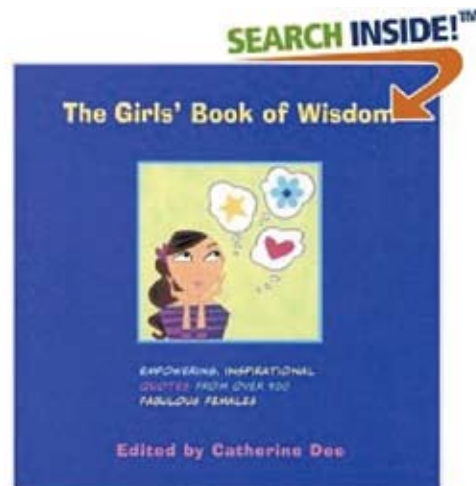
"The one hand washing the other is a pitiful spectacle, but when one hand washes the other, power is increased, and it becomes a force to be reckoned with."

— Maya Angelou, poet, writer

"Laughter can be more satisfying than honor; more precious than money; more heart cleansing than prayer."

— Harriet Rochlin, writer

Source: [The Girls' Book of Wisdom](#). Edited by Catherine Dee.
Published in 1999 by MT Books.



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