

FIGHTING OBESITY OR CONTRIBUTING TO A PUBLIC HEALTH THREAT?



DIETING TO CONTROL WEIGHT

- Overweight girls are more concerned about their weight, more dissatisfied with their bodies, and more likely to diet than their normal-weight peers. (Burrows & Cooper, 2002; Davison, et al., 2000; and Vander Wal & Thelen, 2000)
- 51% of 9 and 10 year-old girls feel better about themselves if they are on a diet (Mellin et al., 1991).
- 46% of 9-11 year-olds are "sometimes" or "very often" on diets (Kurth et al., 1995)
- 91% of women recently surveyed on a college campus had attempted to control their weight through dieting, 22% dieted "often" or "always" (Kurth et al., 1995)
- 95% of all dieters will regain their lost weight in 1-5 years (Grodstein, 1996).

IMPACT OF DIETING—counterproductive, and potentially dangerous

- 35% of "normal dieters" progress to pathological dieting. Of those, 20-25% progress to partial or full-syndrome eating disorders (Shisslak & Crago, 1995)
- Studies show that when mothers try to restrict their children's food, the children actually tend to eat more when they are not being supervised. (Birch, L, 2002).
- In American high schools, 30 percent of girls and 16 percent of boys schools suffer from disordered eating, including bingeing, vomiting, fasting, laxative and diet pill use, and compulsive exercise (Austin, et al., 2001).
- **The risk for obesity may be 324 percent greater for adolescent girls who describe themselves as dieters than girls who do not diet.** (Stice, et al., 1999)
- People who are obese or at risk of becoming obese are more likely to use unhealthy weight loss practices, such as vomiting and using diet pills or laxatives (Neumark-Sztainer, et al., 1999 and 1997).
- More than one-third of obese individuals in weight-loss treatment programs report difficulties with binge eating (Yanovski, 2002).
- As a result of being overweight, self-esteem and overall quality of life can be decreased with eating disorders occurring more frequently (Neumark Sztainer, et al., 2002).

IMPACT OF EATING DISORDERS

- Disordered eating and dieting have been linked to serious risk-taking behaviors such as drug, alcohol and tobacco use, delinquency, unprotected sexual activity, dating violence, and suicide attempts (Neumark-Sztainer, 1996).
- Without treatment, up to twenty percent (20%) of people with serious eating disorders die. With treatment, that number falls to two to three percent (2-3%)(Anorexia Nervosa and Related Eating Disorders, Inc., 2006).
- In the United States, as many as 10 million females and 1 million males are fighting a life and death battle with an eating disorder such as anorexia or bulimia. Millions more are struggling with binge eating disorder (Crowther et al., 1992; Fairburn et al., 1993; Gordon, 1990; Hoek, 1995; Shisslak et al., 1995).
- Anorexia nervosa has the highest premature fatality rate of any mental illness (Sullivan, 1995).

- Anorexia is the 3rd most common chronic illness among adolescents (South Carolina Department of Mental Health, 2006).
- 40% of newly identified cases of anorexia are in girls 15-19 years old. (Hoek, H.W., & van Hoeken, D, 2003).

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