



THE PLAIN DEALER

Ten Things Teens Wish Parents Knew About Weight Loss

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1. "Don't tell me my weight is OK."

If your teen is overweight, and he or she wants to slim down, listen and offer to help find solutions. Don't minimize the problem.

2. "Get off my back."

Don't nag, preach, criticize or try to coerce your teen into losing weight. Be a friend, not a disciplinarian.

3. "Let me be in charge."

It's up to the teen to decide if, how and when he or she wants to lose.

4. "Don't be a food cop."

Comments such as "you've had enough" and "you don't need that bowl of ice cream" will backfire.

5. "Be there when I'm ready."

Support your teen's choices and praise his or her efforts. Help find affordable ways to exercise or a program he or she would like. Be a role model for healthy eating and exercise.

6. "Help me out, don't single me out."

Create a healthy food climate at home - one for the entire family, not just the teen. Provide kids with healthy, appealing food choices without making them feel deprived.

7. "Love me no matter what."

Let your teen know he or she is loved, however much he or she weighs.

8. "Be patient."

Losing weight takes time, effort, patience and often multiple attempts.

9. "Help me be realistic."

After losing weight, your teen may not be "thin," but he or she will be healthier and happier.

10. "Believe in me."

Send the message that you know your teen can succeed and that you'll be there if needed.

From "Weight Loss Confidential: How Teens Lose Weight and Keep It Off and What They Wish Parents Knew" by Anne M. Fletcher (Houghton-Mifflin, 2007).

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