



Diet And Self-Esteem

You may have heard the adage, "You are what you eat". Perhaps you have noticed a difference in how you feel after you eat certain foods. Maybe you get a little bloated after eating some types of vegetables, or maybe your energy levels take a dive when you skip a meal or eat sugary foods. Everybody is different. However, we all need regular, nutritious meals to function at our best.

For people with low self-esteem, there may be a temptation to jump on board food and nutrition fads, as a way of fitting in. You may have read what a certain celebrity does for their diet and try to copy them, hoping that you can look like them. Often diet trends are a way for celebrities to get publicity or companies to make money. Less often, diet trends actually benefit your health.

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Preoccupation with Diet and Exercise

If you find that your self-esteem is based on how much you weigh, your dress size, or if you are intensely preoccupied with food and exercise, it is worth seeking out the counsel of a mental health professional. Low self-esteem can contribute to and sustain disordered eating habits, which require specialist help to overcome.

Unhealthy Choices

Think about how you treat your best friend or someone you love. What would you say to them if you saw them neglecting themselves, not eating well, not taking care of their appearance, and not exercising? The chances are you would probably try to help them, or make

suggestions. If we are not eating nutritious, regular meals, our bodies may be lacking some of the vital energy, vitamins and minerals they need to function properly.

Note, a healthy diet does not mean deprivation or following a fad. It means eating regularly, with foods from each food group. It means listening to your body and honoring its need for nourishment. For sound information about what to eat, have a look at these websites of the [British Nutritional Foundation](#), ^[1] [British Dietetic Association](#) ^[2], and the dietary requirements and [recommendations](#) ^[3] issued by the Canadian government.

Food and Health

There is increasing research and evidence into how food affects our mood. If we eat highly processed food at irregular times, it wouldn't be surprising if our body starts craving certain things, and our mood crashes. When we feel low in ourselves, we may either lose interest in food, or comfort ourselves with food.

To break the unhealthy eating patterns, it's important to follow a structured eating schedule throughout the day. This may seem hard at first but will help balance your blood sugar and mood, ultimately leading to you feeling better about yourself.

"The Food-Mood Solution: All-Natural Ways to Banish Anxiety, Depression, Anger, Stress, Overeating, and Alcohol and Drug Problems--and Feel Good Again", by Jack Challem and Melvyn R. Werbach is an informative, detailed look at how our diet influences how we feel.

Cooking and Its Benefits

Learning to cook your own food is empowering and a useful life skill to have. There are plenty of cooking tutorials, shows and books available on the Internet. Think about your family and friends. Who can cook, and who would be willing to teach you a few things in the kitchen? Invest the time in learning how to cook some basic meals. This is knowledge you need for the rest of your life!

Keep a Food Diary

To implement changes to your diet, a good starting point is to keep a food diary. For templates, see [here](#) ^[4]. After a week, have an honest look at your diaries and see if there are any patterns. Then, for the next week, plan your meals. Write down the plans and make your shopping list accordingly. Once you have found a sustainable way of eating which both nourishes and sustains you, you're going to feel much more positive about yourself.

Key Points

- Dietary requirements vary from person to person, but every single one of us needs to eat regular, nutritious meals.
- In our diet-obsessed society, it can be a trap to hinge our self-esteem on how much we

weigh or how successfully we follow a diet plan.

- Eating habits need to be sustainable and sensible in order to give us enough energy to fuel our bodies and minds throughout the day.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/lifestages/students.html>, [2] https://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/home#healthy_eating, [3] <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/order-commander/index-eng.php#a1>, [4] <http://www.sampletemplates.com/business-templates/food-diary-template.html>, [5] <https://explorable.com/users/kimlyon>, [6] <https://explorable.com/e/diet-and-self-esteem>