How Do You See Yourself?

Before we talk about body image, take just a minute to look at the exercise below entitled, “Three Women I Admire Most.” Think about the question and fill in your answers now. We’ll come back to them in a minute.

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall…

Your body image is the mental picture you have of yourself. This “mind picture” may be exactly the way others see you, too. If it is, that’s great. That means that you have a realistic – and healthy – body image.

But chances are, your mental picture of yourself is at least a little distorted. That’s true for most of us. We see ourselves as too tall, too short, too fat, too flat-chested. We look in the mirror and see noses that are too big (even when they’re really not), hair that’s too frizzy, and thighs that are too jiggly.

Our mental image of ourselves often has nothing to do with reality. Haven’t you known a beautiful girl who hates the way she looks, even though every other girl in school would give anything to look like she does? In extreme cases, as in the eating disorder anorexia nervosa, a tall girl who weighs only 85 pounds looks in the mirror and sees herself as disgustingly fat.

Three Women I Admire Most…

Close your eyes for a minute and think about the women (or girls) who have made a difference in your life or who have made an important contribution to the world. Your admirable women can be friends, relatives, neighbors, teachers, or more-famous people. Now write down three names in the spaces below.
That’s almost impossible to believe, but it’s true – and it shows how powerful our “mind pictures” can be.

Fortunately, most of our body images aren’t quite that far off. But even a little distortion can make you feel unhappy with yourself. That’s why it’s important to understand why we feel the way we do about our bodies and to take steps to be a little kinder to ourselves.

**Who Says You’re Not OK?**

Body image problems and obsessions with weight loss, hard bodies, and breast implants are a new thing. Our great-grandmothers had it so much easier. They didn’t have TV, movies, magazines, or gymnastics coaches telling them how they should look or what they should weigh. They also didn’t have to walk around in gym shorts and bikinis with their bodies exposed for the entire world to see.

In order to get to a size 4 (or – oh my gosh! – even a size 0), most models and movie stars lead very strange lives. They eat only tiny amounts of food (which doesn’t sound like much fun!) and then spend several hours exercising each day. Many have had multiple operations to enlarge their breasts, smooth their thighs, and fix any other “imperfections.” And if that weren’t enough, most of the photos we see in magazines have been touched up to hide any remaining flaws.
So much of what we see in the magazines and movies isn’t real at all. And if that’s what we compare ourselves to, we’ll always be depressed about the way we look. Instead of comparing yourself to other people, you may want to get to know yourself a little better. Take a minute now to do the body image exercise called “Say ‘Hello’ to the REAL You.” We think you’ll like what you see!

Did you fill in all the blanks? Now that you’ve discovered five things you like about your appearance, why not go for 10, or even 20? The more you find to like about yourself, the happier and more self-confident you’ll be.

So what about those things you’re NOT so crazy about? Ask yourself two questions: “Is it really that important?” If so, “Can I do something about it?” If your not-so-great trait is really important to you and it’s something you can change, then go for it. If not, forget about it and concentrate on more important things.

The key to looking your best is to emphasize your good points and take steps to improve the areas of your appearance that need a little work. We’ll talk about how to do that in the sections that follow: Eating Right, Staying Active, and Slimming Down.

Now, it’s time to look back at your answers in “Three Women I Admire Most.” Here are some questions to ponder: How many of the women you chose wear a size 2? (Or even a size 4 or size 6?) Which ones have buns-of-steel or breasts out to HERE? Count the ones who have perfect turned-up noses or flawless skin.

How many did you come up with? Not many, we’d guess – and probably not any. Chances are that your “most admired” list is full of average-looking women, with comfortable bodies and pleasant – but not perfect – faces.
The point is that these are all women who have accomplished great things or who have been important in your life – and they didn’t do it with flat stomachs or flawless thighs. They’re REAL women, just like you!

Say “Hello” to the REAL You!

*Here’s a little body image exercise to try: First, find a mirror. Take a long, calm look at yourself (no screaming or making faces). Be kind to yourself. Don’t immediately focus on the things you don’t like. Instead, treat yourself the way you would treat a good friend. Try to see yourself objectively, the way a stranger on the street sees you. Squint your eyes if you need to, or pretend you are someone being introduced to you for the first time. Take your time, think carefully, and fill in the blanks:*

**Five things I like about the way I look (and why):**

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

**Three things I’d like to improve (and how I could):**

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
Eating Right to Look and Feel Your Best

Did you know that the type of foods you eat affects how you look, how you feel, and even your mood? To get all the nutrients you need each day, you need to eat a variety of foods from each of these five major food groups:

- vegetables
- fruits
- breads, cereals, rice, and pasta
- milk, yogurt, and cheese
- meat, poultry, fish, legumes (beans and peas), eggs, and nuts

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has developed a new food pyramid called MyPyramid (see illustration below) to show the types of food you need each day to stay healthy. The different food groups are represented with vertical bands of different widths. Wider bands (such as grains and vegetables) indicate that you need more of these foods. Skinnier bands (such as oils and meat and beans) represent foods that should be eaten in smaller amounts. The new MyPyramid graphic also includes a person climbing stairs to stress the importance of daily exercise.
Notice that solid fats and sugars are not part of the pyramid. Instead, they are considered to be “extras” (or “discretionary calories”) and are allowed only in limited amounts. Girls who get lots of exercise are given a larger amount of extras than girls who are not physically active.

That’s because oils and other fats have more calories than any other types of food and our bodies require only small amounts each day. Sugar, too, packs a lot of calories but no nutrients – nothing that our body requires in order to work properly. In other words, sugar contains empty calories.

**Personalize Your Plan**

The MyPyramid website can provide a personalized diet plan just for you. Go to www.mypyramid.gov and fill in your age, sex, and level of daily exercise (less than 30 minutes, 30 to 60 minutes, or more than 60 minutes). Your personalized plan will display the amounts of grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, and meat and beans you should be eating each day. It also provides your daily allowance of oils and extras (solid fats and sugars).

For example, a 15-year-old girl who gets 30 to 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise each day should eat:

- grains (6 oz.)
- vegetables (2-1/2 cups)
- fruit (2 cups)
- milk or milk products (3 cups)
- meat or beans (5-1/2 oz.)

She may also consume 6 teaspoons of oil. This physically active 15-year-old also is allowed 265 calories for extras (added sugars, solid fats like butter, or a sweetened or higher-fat product like chocolate milk or regular cheese). If this girl were not as physically active (getting less than 30 minutes of daily exercise), she would be allowed only 5 teaspoons of oil and 195 calories for extras.

The MyPyramid website includes links to detailed information on each of the food groups. These links describe the nutritional and health benefits of the foods. They also provide examples of various

resource: www.mypyramid.gov
food choices and the specific amounts that count as one serving. You can print out MyPyramid Meal Tracking Worksheets to help you keep track of your daily food intake and exercise.

Focus on Food Groups

Grains, vegetables, and fruits are your best sources of vitamins, most minerals, and dietary fiber. A diet high in fiber reduces the risk of cancer and heart disease and helps control your weight by making you feel full longer. Health experts say we need at least 20 to 35 grams of fiber every day. (The Nutrition Facts box on packaged foods gives information on the calories, fat, fiber, and other nutrients in one serving of that food. See “Making Sense of Food Labels” below.)

Milk products are rich in calcium and are a good source of protein. Calcium is very important for girls. You need lots of it to build strong bones and teeth. The bone mass you build (with calcium-rich foods) in your teens and young adult years needs to last you a lifetime. When you get older (about age 50), you will start to lose more bone mass than you make. If you lose too much, your bones become brittle and can break easily (a

Making Sense of Food Labels

**Serving Size:**
amount of food to which all the other numbers refer.
Sometimes a food can seem nutritious until you compare serving size to how much you usually eat.

**Total Fat & Saturated Fat:**
tells you how many grams of different types of fat are in one serving. This helps you understand how much and what kind of fat is in a food.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving Size 15 crackers (30g)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servings per container: About 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount per serving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories 130 Calories from Fat 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Daily Value*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat 3.5g 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat 0.5g 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol 0mg 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium 230mg 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate 22g 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber 1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars 4g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein 2g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Vitamin A 10% |
| Vitamin C 0% |
| Calcium 4% |
| Iron 6% |

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

| Calories: 2,000 | 2,500 |
|----------------|
| Total Fat Less than 65g | 80g |
| Sat Fat Less than 20g | 25g |
| Cholesterol Less than 300mg | 300mg |
| Sodium Less than 2,400mg | 3,000mg |
| Total Carbohydrate 300g | 375g |
| Dietary Fiber 25g | 30g |

**INGREDIENTS:** Enriched wheat flour, vegetable shortening (partially hydrogenated soybean oil), sugar, salt, leavening (calcium phosphate, baking soda), hydrolyzed corn and yeast protein (contains glutamate).
condition called osteoporosis). So it’s important to start off with strong bones.

Meat and beans are your main sources of protein. Your body needs protein for the normal growth and repair of all cells and tissues (organs, muscles, nerves, blood, skin, hair). It also helps fight infection and fatigue. Protein foods are good sources of B vitamins, iron, zinc, and magnesium. Nuts, seeds, and plant oils are rich in vitamin E and essential fatty acids required for good health.

**Food Choices and Servings**

Here’s a quick look at the food choices and the general serving sizes recommended in each food group. (To view more food choices and serving sizes, go to www.mypyramid.gov.)

**Grains.** The grain group includes foods made from wheat, oats, rice, cornmeal, barley, and other cereal grains. At least half of your daily grains should be “whole grains.” Whole grains preserve the whole kernel of grain. Whole grain products include whole wheat breads, cereals, crackers, pasta, and tortillas plus oatmeal, brown rice, wild rice, whole cornmeal, cracked wheat, and popcorn. Whole grains are high in fiber.

In refined grains, the whole kernel has been stripped from the grain, removing B vitamins, iron, and much of the dietary fiber. Most refined grain products are “enriched” after processing. This means the vitamins and iron are added back, but the fiber is not. Refined grain products include regular crackers, noodles, spaghetti, macaroni, flour and corn tortillas, pretzels, and most breakfast cereals, plus white bread products and white rice.

**General serving size:** One ounce of grain is 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or 1/2 cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal.

**Vegetables.** The MyPyramid plan groups vegetables as dark green, orange, starchy, dry beans and peas, and other types. Choose several servings from each group each week. Here are some examples from each group:

- Dark green (broccoli, dark green leafy lettuce, romaine lettuce, spinach)
- Orange (sweet potatoes, carrots, butternut squash, pumpkin)
• Dry beans and peas (black beans, black-eyed peas, pinto beans, soybeans or tofu, split peas)
• Starchy (corn, green peas, lima beans, potatoes)
• Other vegetables (green beans, tomatoes, cabbage, green or red peppers, zucchini, iceberg lettuce, vegetable juice)

General serving size: One serving is 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice or 2 cups of raw leafy greens.

---

**Is It OK to Be a Vegetarian?**

Yes. A vegetarian diet can be a very healthful way to live. In fact, health experts would like to see everyone eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and less meat.

The two most common types of vegetarians are lacto-ovo (eats no meat but does eat milk products and eggs) and vegan (eats no animal products).

The best type of vegetarian diet for an adolescent or teen is the lacto-ovo diet. That’s because it’s easier to satisfy your calcium and protein requirements when you include milk, yogurt, cheese, and eggs. People who don’t eat meat can develop iron deficiency anemia (a condition that can cause tiredness and weakness). So if you decide to become a vegetarian, check with your school nurse, health clinic, or family doctor for a food plan that will provide all the nutrients you need. A daily multivitamin with iron may be recommended.

---

**Fruits.** Choose any type of whole fruit (fresh, canned, frozen, dried) or 100% fruit juice. Fruit choices include apples, bananas, berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, cherries), grapefruit, grapes, melons (cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon), oranges, peaches, pears, pineapple, raisins, 100% juice (orange, apple, grape, grapefruit), and many more. Choose whole fruit more often than fruit juice.

General serving size: One serving is 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice or 1/2 cup of dried fruit.

**Milk.** Milk choices include milk, yogurt, or cheese (hard natural cheese, ricotta, cottage cheese, processed cheese). Most of your choices should be low-fat or fat-free products. They also should have no added sugars. If you opt for a full-fat product (like regular cheddar cheese) or a sweetened milk product (like chocolate milk or
frozen yogurt), compare the calories in the product to the calories of the low-fat version. The calorie difference should be counted as part of your extra or “discretionary” calories for the day.

General serving size: The typical serving size is 1 cup of milk, 1 regular container of yogurt, 2 cups of cottage cheese, 1-1/2 ounces of natural hard cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese.

Meat and beans. Choose lean or low-fat meats (like beef, ham, or pork); poultry (like chicken or turkey); fish; eggs; dry beans and peas (including soybeans, tofu, veggie burger patties, black-eyed peas, lentils); and nuts and seeds (almonds, cashews, peanuts, peanut butter, sunflower seeds, walnuts). Choose fish, nuts, and seeds more often than meat or poultry. Meats should be baked, broiled, or grilled – not fried. Always trim visible fat from meats and remove the skin from poultry.

General serving size: A 1-ounce serving is 1 ounce of meat, poultry, or fish; 1/2 cup of cooked dry beans; 1 egg; 1 tablespoon of peanut butter; or 1/2 ounce of nuts or seeds.

Oils. Most of us get plenty of oils through cooking oil, salad dressings, mayonnaise, and tub or squeeze margarines. Nuts, seeds, avocados, and olives also are naturally high in healthful oils. Be careful not to consume too much oil. Each tablespoon has about 120 calories. Also, check the Nutrition Facts panel (see page 9) of margarines to make sure they contain no trans fat (a very unhealthy type of fat).

Smooth Move...

Don’t like plain milk? Make a fruit smoothie. It’s a great way to get calcium, protein, and fruit – all in one delicious drink. Smoothies are easy to make and easy to take (in case you’re in a hurry).

To make a fruit smoothie:
1. Put 1 cup of fruit in the blender (try 1/2 cup banana and 1/2 cup strawberry).
2. Blend. Slowly add 1/2 cup of low-fat milk.
3. Add a small amount of honey (if desired).
4. Enjoy.

(For an extra-frosty smoothie, slice and freeze the fruit first.)

Experiment with different types of fruit and fruit juices. (Try 1 cup of orange juice, 1/2 cup of plain yogurt, and a small banana.) Add flavorings (such as vanilla or maple extract) and spices (such as cinnamon or nutmeg). Let your imagination go wild!
Solid fats are considered “extras” and should be consumed only in small amounts and preferably not at all. Solid fats include butter, stick margarine, lard, and shortening (including vegetable shortening).

**General serving size:** Oil serving sizes are measured in teaspoons (1 tablespoon is 3 teaspoons). Eight large olives count as 1 teaspoon of oil, 1/2 of an avocado counts as 3 teaspoons, 2 tablespoons of peanut butter counts as 4 teaspoons, and 1 ounce of most nuts counts as 3 teaspoons.

One more thing: Try to drink 6–8 glasses of water every day. It’s important for all your body functions. Plus, drinking lots of water helps your skin look its best and can keep you from feeling hungry between meals.

Feeling a little overwhelmed? Don’t worry. No one expects you to become a Nutrition Saint or to never eat another brownie. And the Food Police won’t arrest you if you eat French fries once in a while.

The important point is to be aware of what you are eating. Then try to go a little easier on the junk and a little heavier on the good foods. Small changes in the way you eat can make a big difference.

**Good vs. Bad Fats**

Not all fats are unhealthy. Omega-3 fatty acids are “good fats” found primarily in fish and fish oil. Canola oil and flaxseeds, walnuts, and soybeans (and their oils) also contain these healthful fats. Omega-3 fatty acids have beneficial effects on your heart, eyes, and brain.

Monounsaturated fats (found in olives, olive oil, canola oil, avocados, almonds, peanuts, peanut butter, sesame seeds, and macadamia nuts) are other healthful fats. They help protect your heart and may reduce the risk of some cancers.

Saturated fats and trans fatty acids (also called trans fats) are the troublemakers. Saturated fats are found primarily in animal products...
What’s Up with Fat?

Everyone needs some fat each day. But most of us eat way too much. Fat is everywhere in our modern diet of fast-food meals, store-bought foods, snacks, and desserts.

Too much fat clogs the blood vessels that bring oxygen to the heart and brain. (This artery “goo” begins forming during childhood.) Clogged arteries can cause heart attacks and strokes later in life. Too much fat in the diet also has been linked to several types of cancer, including colon cancer and breast cancer. Finally, a high-fat diet leads to weight gain. Fat packs more calories than protein or carbohydrates.

High-fat foods include: Hamburgers and most other meats, fried foods (including fried chicken, chicken nuggets, doughnuts, and French fries), pizza, whole milk, ice cream, cookies, candy bars, cakes, pies, pastries, dips, and salad dressings.

You don’t have to give up these foods to be healthy. You just need to choose them less often. Think of these high-fat favorites as a special treat, not everyday eating.

For help in making good choices in fast-food restaurants, see “Fast-Food Frenzy” on page 19.

(such as meats and regular milk, butter, and cheese) and in palm oil and coconut oil. Bakery products and snack foods made with these ingredients are a major dietary source of saturated fat. These bad fats raise levels of LDL (“bad”) cholesterol (increasing the risk of heart disease) and are linked to the development of several types of cancer.

Trans fats are oils that have been chemically altered to be more stable at room temperature. These fats are commonly used in French fries and other fast foods, and they enable margarine to remain solid at room temperature. Food manufacturers also use trans fats to extend the shelf life of processed foods like cookies, crackers, and snack foods. Trans fats behave like saturated fats in your body and may be even worse for your health.

The best way to reduce your intake of unhealthy fats is to eat fewer fast foods, bakery products, and snack foods and use low-fat or fat-free dairy products.
**Staying Active**

Did you know that you can dance your way to good health and a great body? It’s true. Regular physical activity is just about the best thing you can do for yourself. It keeps your body in shape, reduces stress (we all need that!), improves your mood, and boosts your energy level. And it doesn’t have to be a boring, run-four-laps-around-the-track kind of activity.

Just turn on some music and dance. While you’re perfecting your dancing skills, you’ll be putting your heart and lungs through a great aerobic workout. Aerobic activities increase your heart rate (which strengthens your heart) and make you breathe hard and sweat a little.

If you haven’t been active for a while, start out with a few minutes of dancing. Gradually increase your dance time until you’re moving around for about 30 minutes. Health experts say we should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity almost every day.

Dancing’s not your thing? No problem. You have plenty of other activities to choose from:

- Walk your dog (he’ll love you for it).
- Jump rope.
- Go skating or riding bikes with some friends.
- Turn on an exercise show on TV.
- Walk the mall with a friend.

---

**Lifting Weights Isn’t Just for Jocks**

*Who said girls don’t do weights? Weightlifting (or strength training) is an excellent activity for everyone – especially girls. It actually increases our bone mass, which is the key to avoiding osteoporosis later in life.*

*Plus, strength training builds muscle mass (but not the big, bulky muscles that guys develop – it takes lots of male hormones to do that). Muscle mass is really important in weight control because muscle uses up more energy (calories) than fat does. More muscle mass means that our bodies burn more calories, even when we’re asleep (what a deal!).*

*The best way to learn about strength training is through a coach at school or an instructor at your local YMCA or gym. You can lift weights two or three times per week. But don’t exercise the same muscles two days in a row – your muscles need at least one day to rest!*
• Sign up for an exercise class at your local community center.
• Stay after school and walk the track with your friends.
• Find a sport that you really love. Volleyball, soccer, basketball, tennis, swimming, and track are all great activities. Gymnastics, cheerleading, martial arts, softball, and bowling are good activities, too.

The point is to find some activities that you really enjoy and do them regularly.

Are You Overweight?

For an increasing number of teenagers, the answer to that question is yes. In fact, in the last 30 years, obesity has more than doubled among American teenagers. Some of the reasons: more fast food meals, super-sized portions, unhealthy snacks, and sugar-loaded soft drinks. Add hours of daily screen time on the computer or watching TV and you have a recipe for weight gain.

We all know that being overweight is no fun. It can zap your energy, make you feel uncomfortable in your clothes, and drag down your self-esteem. Girls who are overweight often get teased, bullied, or left out of the social scene. Excess weight can lead to depression, negative body image, abnormal menstrual periods, sleep problems, and type 2 diabetes. It also increases the risk of heart disease and cancer later in life.

Calculating your body mass index (BMI) will show whether you are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. BMI relies on height and weight to determine the amount of body fat. The best way to find your BMI is to use the BMI calculator on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website. (Go to www.cdc.gov and type in “child and teen BMI calculator” in the search box.)
Slimming Down

Dieting, as in not eating at all or living on nothing but lettuce and celery, is not a good idea. That’s true for everyone, but especially for adolescents and teens. First off, it doesn’t work. Secondly, it robs your body of important nutrients that you need to grow and be healthy.

It’s true that if you don’t eat or if you eat only “rabbit food,” the numbers on your scale will go down. But at least half of that “weight loss” is really water loss. As soon as you eat regular food, your weight will bounce back up.

What’s the solution to losing weight? Eat a little less and exercise a little more. That doesn’t sound exciting, but it’s the only real solution...

More importantly, our bodies are pretty smart, and they’re programmed for survival. If you starve your body long enough or often enough, it learns to function on fewer calories. Everything slows down, and you’ll need less food to stay at your current weight. That makes weight gain more likely. It also makes it even harder to lose weight the next time. Not a good thing!

Plus, when you deprive yourself of foods you enjoy, you’re setting yourself up for a real binge. Sooner or later you’ll crave those foods so much that you’ll end up pigging out on them and gaining back the weight you lost – and maybe more!

So what’s the solution to losing weight? Eat a little less and exercise a little more. That doesn’t sound too exciting, but it’s the only real solution to long-term weight control. Focus on the nutrition and exercise guidelines we discussed...

Do the Math

• One pound of body fat = 3,500 calories.
• To lose one pound per week, you need to get rid of 500 calories per day (7 days X 500 calories = 3,500 calories).
• You can do that by eating 500 calories less each day or by burning 500 calories more each day or by combining the two – eating a few hundred calories less and burning a few hundred calories more.
Test Your Drive-Through I.Q.

In a Brady Bunch world, we’d all have a cook who puts nutritious home-cooked meals in front of us every night. But in the real world, we’re more likely to grab at least some of our meals at a fast-food restaurant. That can make weight control more challenging.

Before we take a look at good choices in fast-food restaurants, let’s test your “Drive-Through I.Q.”

Questions:

1. If you’re watching your dietary fat and calories, which of the following selections is the smartest choice?
   a. regular hamburger
   b. chicken nuggets
   c. fish sandwich

2. Which has more fat?
   a. grilled chicken salad with ranch dressing
   b. large taco
   c. grilled chicken sandwich

3. A value-priced meal with a bacon cheese-burger, large French fries, and a large soda is:
   a. a lot of food for the money
   b. a heart attack in a sack
   c. nearly a day’s worth of calories and almost two days’ worth of fat
   d. all of the above

Answers:

1. a. A plain hamburger has about 300 calories and 12 grams of fat, compared to 400 calories and 25 grams of fat for 9 chicken nuggets and about 700 calories and 40 grams of fat for a fish sandwich.

2. a. The salad WOULD HAVE BEEN a good choice, but ONE package of dressing contains about 20 grams of fat. The large taco has about 17 grams of fat, and a grilled chicken sandwich (without mayo) has about 5 grams of fat. To make the salad healthy, use a reduced-fat dressing.

3. d. All of the above. Your value-priced meal totaled 1,750 calories and 109 grams of fat!

How’d you do? If you didn’t do so well, don’t feel bad. Fast-food restaurants are tricky. Some of the foods that sound healthiest – like fish, salad, or chicken – can be real heart-stoppers and hip-expanders if they’re fried or covered with dressing. Check “Fast Food Frenzy” on the next page to discover ways to make better choices and still have fun eating fast-food.
earlier. Try to increase your physical activity while you cut back on high-calorie, nutritionally empty foods, especially soft drinks, snack foods, and desserts. Small changes can have amazing effects.

Aim for a modest weight loss of 1 to 2 pounds per week. A slow, steady weight loss is safer than crash dieting, and the weight is more likely to stay off. If you can trim 300 calories per day from your diet (that’s one large candy bar or a 12-ounce can of soda and a small bag of chips) and burn 200 calories with 45 minutes of exercise, you’ll lose a pound a week, or about 25 pounds in six months (see “Do the Math” on page 17). Simply cutting back on fast foods can make a big difference (see “Test Your Drive-Through I.Q.” on page 18 and “Fast-Food Frenzy” below).

One final point: Don’t get carried away with losing weight. Girls are supposed to have a little padding. We weren’t made to be like clothes hangers, with all those pointy angles and bones sticking out. Mother Nature gives us a little layer of fat so that our bodies can protect and nurture a baby someday.

**Fast-Food Frenzy**

Ordering in fast-food restaurants can be tricky. Here are some hints on making good menu choices:

- Look for grilled chicken items, such as a plain grilled chicken sandwich (hold the mayo) or chicken fajita (hold the sour cream and guacamole).
- Choose a grilled chicken salad instead of a chef salad or taco salad. Be sure to ask for the fat-free or reduced-fat dressing.
- Order a plain hamburger or a roast beef sandwich (no mayo – try mustard instead). Ask for extra lettuce and tomato to make it more filling and to add vegetables to your meal.
- Choose single items – not “value” meals – and order everything in small or regular sizes.
- Split an order with a friend or take half home to eat the next day.
- If you’re unsure about the best choice, ask to see the restaurant’s nutrition information.
Eating Disorders

Lots of girls worry about their weight. But sometimes these worries turn into eating disorders. Eating disorders can have serious – even deadly – health consequences. If you recognize yourself – or a friend – in the descriptions that follow, get help.

Talk with a friend, parent, teacher, school guidance counselor, clinic nurse, or doctor. But don’t wait. Most people with an eating disorder need professional treatment. The longer the illness goes untreated, the harder it is to overcome.

Anorexia Nervosa

Girls and women with anorexia nervosa are obsessed with being thin. They starve themselves, exercise for hours, use laxatives, and sometimes vomit up their food to lose more and more weight. Girls with anorexia nervosa have a very distorted body image. They continue to see themselves as too fat, even when they are extremely underweight. Many anorexic girls don’t realize they have a problem. If left untreated, anorexia nervosa can lead to serious heart problems, even death.

Bulimia Nervosa

Girls with bulimia nervosa typically are not significantly overweight or underweight. But they’re preoccupied with food and terrified of getting fat. Bulimic girls binge (eat huge amounts of food, often in an out-of-control manner) and then purge (force themselves to vomit up the food).
Frequent purging can lead to inflammation of the throat and damage to the teeth.

After a binge, a girl also may use laxatives, diuretics ("water pills"), or diet pills. She may starve herself or over-exercise to keep from gaining weight. Girls who are bulimic often feel intense shame, guilt, anxiety, and depression over their behavior. But they feel powerless to stop it.

**Binge-Eating Disorder**

Binge-eating disorder involves eating large amounts of food within a short amount of time. Girls who have the disorder often feel powerless and out of control during the episodes. They typically eat alone (often to the point of discomfort) because they are ashamed of how much they are eating. Afterward they feel guilty, disgusted with themselves, and depressed. Binge-eating disorder is similar to bulimia nervosa except that girls usually don’t purge, fast, or exercise excessively to get rid of the extra calories. As a result, many girls who binge are overweight. Girls may binge in response to stress, emotional pain, or anger.

Do you recognize yourself or someone you know in any of these descriptions? If so, it’s important to get help. See the Hotline numbers in the back of the book.

**Tattoos and Body Piercing**

People have been decorating their bodies with tattoos and body piercing since ancient times. Although tattoos and piercing are a popular means of self-expression, people have strong reactions to both. Parents, teachers, employers, friends, and new boyfriends may judge you or assume things about you based on your “body art.” Tattoos and pierced body parts are permanent, unless you can afford expensive laser surgery or other plastic surgery to remove or repair them.
Make sure you understand the risks of tattooing and piercing. Both can transmit serious diseases if the equipment is contaminated. These include hepatitis, tetanus, tuberculosis, and HIV infection (AIDS). Skin infections and allergic reactions are possible, and some people may develop excessive scarring around the tattoo or piercing.

Piercings in the mouth or nose pose a higher risk of infection because those areas are full of bacteria. Also, a pierced tongue can damage your teeth and cause gum problems.

If you decide to go ahead with a tattoo or body piercing, have it done with sterilized equipment in a clean, safe place. Needles that have been re-used can spread dangerous infections. Don’t be afraid to ask how the needle or instrument was sterilized and to see the sterilized equipment.

Be sure to follow all instructions on how to keep the wound clean. If the area becomes hot, red, or painful, you may have an infection and need to see a doctor immediately.

Before you commit to a tattoo or body piercing, ask yourself these questions:

• Is this what I really want? Or am I being pressured to do it for someone else (like a boyfriend or a group)?
• Am I ready to face possible negative reactions from people?
• How will I feel about this tattoo or piercing a year from now? Five years from now?
• Is there another, less permanent way to express myself?