



Healthy Living: Tips for Parents*

Makeover TV shows, fashion magazines, diet fads—girls are exposed to messages everyday about food, fitness, and appearance from family, friends, media, and school. Parents need tools to help their daughters critically examine the often-conflicting information and make positive decisions for healthy living.

Check out the tips below:

- **Be a positive role model.** Parents, particularly mothers, are a primary influence in their daughters' lives. The choices you make about food and physical activity and the comments you make about your weight and your looks have a strong impact on your daughter.
- **Emphasize the importance of healthy eating.** More than 60% of teenage girls skip breakfast at least once a week, and nearly 20% skip that important meal every day. Too often, these skipped meals translate into trips to school vending machines with few healthy choices.
- **Encourage your child to get moving.** Aside from the clear physical benefits of a higher activity level, being physically active increases self-esteem and reduces stress. Help your daughter find physical activities that are fun so she'll stick with them. In addition, engaging in physical activity as a family is a great way for parents to model and influence positive healthy behaviors.
- **Get involved in community efforts.** Find out what's going on in your community related to healthy living. Work with organizations and your daughter's school to make sure there are a variety of opportunities for regular physical activity and healthy food choices. Encourage your daughter to become an advocate, too. One way to do this is by getting involved in the development and implementation of School Wellness Policies, as required by law, to ensure that the unique girl perspective about healthy living is included.
- **Be relevant.** Frame your conversations about healthy living in ways that address the topics most relevant to your daughter: friendships, fitting in with peers, self-esteem, and feeling safe.

For more information, please visit Girl Scouts of the USA website at www.girlscouts.org/research/ or contact Girl Scouts of Shagbark Council at www.shagbark.org or 1-888-317-6353.

*The word "parent" is used in this tip sheet to represent a child's primary caregiver.