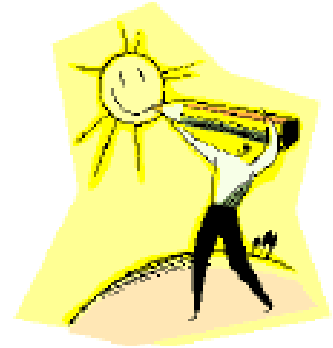


Health Beat



BODY IMAGE

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September 2003

Issues of Being Underweight

By Michelle Biba

Many college students are at risk of being underweight, below the level of what is actually healthy. Excessive weight loss is often prompted by demands from society, participation in competitive sports, or even as a result of health conditions like hyperthyroidism. However, being too thin can lead to many negative side effects on overall health. The following are just some of the risk factors for becoming underweight:

Media

The media is very influential in continuing to promote "thin body images." Their promotion propaganda can lead one to be thinner than they should be. Also, the media highlights diets that promise "anyone" to lose weight. Restrictive diets, use of diuretics, laxatives, and diet pills are among the many methods advertised to lose weight.¹

Athletics

According to Vito A. Perriello, Jr., a pediatrician and chair of the sports medicine advisory committee of the Virginia High School League, to be competitive in a specific category, either intense weight training or weight cutting is required by coaches.² Those who are

cross-country runners or ski jumpers also rely on their low body weight, which allows them to be lighter, leading them to perform more competitively.³

Hyperthyroidism

Hormones regulate many aspects of our metabolism. The thyroid is one of the hormones that regulates the metabolism. Hyperthyroidism develops when the thyroid gland produces an excess of hormones. Hyperthyroidism may cause an underweight condition because the body's metabolism is increased. Often people feel hotter than those around them and can be slowly losing weight even though they may be eating more due to this condition.

Adverse Effects

There are many negative health effects of being underweight. One example is loss of a menstrual period. Another one is reduction of mineral intake. There are several important minerals lost easily when a person is underweight. Minerals that are essential for the body to continue functioning include zinc, iron, chromium, and calcium. Calcium is responsible for your body building bones and keeping them strong. Ninety-nine percent of the calcium in your body is stored in your bones and teeth. Iron is important for delivering oxygen to the body's tissues through

the circulatory system. Zinc supports a healthy immune system and assists in healing wounds. There is also a need for copper in enzyme systems to regulate oxygen consumption, cardiovascular function and neurological function. These elements are essential to a person's survival.

Should this be of a concern to you?

If you answered yes to any risk factor categories, please see a nutritionist or a doctor. The Health Resource Center is offering individual nutrition counseling for students who have concerns with their weight. You can call to find out more about this service at (562) 985-4609.

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SHAW

(Sexual Health Awareness Workshop)

Fall 2003

September Dates:

- Tuesday, 9th
- Wednesday, 10th
- Tuesday, 16th
- Wednesday, 17th
- Tuesday, 23rd
- Wednesday, 24th
- Tuesday, 30th

Reflections on Negative Body Image & Cosmetic Enhancement Surgery

By Brant Burkey

Take a good look at yourself in the mirror. Chances are there is something you do not like about your appearance, some feature you wish to change. Everybody has some glaring flaw they perceive as being incongruous with how they imagine themselves or want to look.

This is where a person's negative body image begins, with a receding hairline, a misshapen proboscis, an intricate web of wrinkles on the forehead, embarrassing skin blemishes, the pitter-patter of crows' feet around the eyes, mismatched breast sizes, stubborn body fat, unmanageable hairstyles, or any other physical detail that leads to unhappiness or distress over one's appearance.

These are the surface traits that people tend to fixate on when it comes to their own looks. The imperfection may be something only you notice or it may stand out conspicuously like a super model at an all-you-can-eat buffet. What really matters is

how the perceived defect makes you feel about yourself.

If the imperfection leads to feelings of embarrassment, inadequacy, or low self-esteem, then inevitably the question becomes whether you should put up with these attitudes, and the flaw itself, or pursue a medical procedure to correct the problem? Many people are increasingly turning to surgical enhancements to improve their self-esteem, as there now exists a cosmetic solution for just about any exterior glitch you may want to repair.

The list of enhancement or reconstructive procedures is lengthy, including rhinoplasty (nose reshaping), chemical peels, breast augmentation, hair replacement, collagen (fat) injections, facelifts, dermabrasions, botulinum toxin treatment (Botox injections), and a variety of laser surgeries applied to hair removal, skin resurfacing, and treatment for veins.¹ In addition, there are surgical procedures devoted specifically to dealing with weight or fat, including liposuction, tummy tucks, and

bariatric surgery (the banding of the stomach to limit food intake).²

This menu of treatments can be performed to improve birth defects, developmental abnormalities, acquired deformities, and a host of other cosmetic concerns, such as excess body hair, age spots, sun damage, unsightly veins, acne, and wrinkles. Plus, if you do elect surgical cosmetic procedures to deal with any unsightly physical flaw, you can be assured that you are not alone.

According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), up to 6.6 million Americans elected surgical cosmetic procedures in 2002 "to achieve the look they want."³ They listed the top five procedures as nose reshaping (rhinoplasty), liposuction, breast augmentation, eyelid surgery, and facelifts. There was also a dramatic upsurge of Botox injections to straighten out wrinkles after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) approved the procedure in 2002.

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Overweight Issues

By Dannie Allen

You may be surprised to learn that in 2002 approximately fifty-five percent of adults in the United States were considered obese, and the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey concluded that thirty-three percent of men were overweight.¹ The National Center for Health Statistics states that more than one-third of all American women are overweight.² In addition, the market for women's plus sizes (sizes 16 and up) is a thriving \$22.7 billion a year.²

The industry truth is, many Americans are overweight, and many are wondering how they can change their lifestyles to become healthier. If you are one of those people who is making excuses about your weight on the bathroom scale or during your annual physical at the doctor's

office, then you should re-evaluate your diet and exercise routine.

Are you as healthy as you could be? Are you overweight? If the honest answer is one you are having trouble dealing with, then talk to a nutrition counselor or friends. Taking a nutrition class on campus can open your mind and educate you about making healthier food choices, and at the same time it will give you credits towards graduation.

If you know you're overweight, then evaluate the situation. Do genetics play a role in your weight? Are you an emotional eater? Do you have positive outlets for your stress, or when you're stressed, do you turn to food? Have you been having health problems due to your weight gain? As a college student residing in the dorms, it is important to bal-

-ance your meals. All too often dining halls tend to offer foods high in carbohydrates.

If you are searching for ways to reduce your weight, the best way is naturally, with no prescriptions or unnatural interventions. Eating healthy probably isn't as hard as you think. Use the food pyramid as a guide for your food choices and serving amounts, and keep your caloric intake appropriate. Exercise is your best ally in trying to lose weight. Walk to class instead of taking the on-campus shuttle. Take a physical education class for units and then you will be forced to squeeze exercise into your busy week.

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Another method to evaluate your weight situation is to examine your lifestyle. Are you engaging in unhealthy habits that could be sabotaging your weight loss efforts? Many college students engage in binge drinking, and do not realize the high amount of calories that beer contains. You don't have to cut out drinking completely from your life, but you could try reducing the amount that you drink, or try turning to light beer, which has fewer calories.

It is important to realize that each case of over-weightness or obesity is case dependent. Each person is different, comes from different backgrounds, has different genes, has different life-

styles, and is at a different place in life. Not every college student lives in the dorms. Not every college student engages in a physical activity he or she enjoys to relieve stress. Every person doesn't have the same story.

By making many small, subtle changes in your life, such as cutting back on the amount of alcohol that you drink, substituting light beer, doing more exercise, and cutting back on the amount of calories in your meals, you will begin to see a positive change. By being healthy your mind will be more sound and it will help you to achieve the good grades you deserve!

If you still are not seeing the effects that you wish to see with your weight after evaluating and trying to make positive changes then consult your physician and discuss what other options might help you achieve a healthy weight.

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Beauty to Die For

By Maya Hill

O.K., let's get this straight! Society wants us, students, to be experts in our field of study, successful, rich and beautifully in shape. All of the size four women and muscle-bound actors can make us envious (everyone wants to look like someone on T.V.). But let's face it, all of this pressure to be great and in shape can get a little overbearing and cause some of us to take drastic measures.

Bulimia Nervosa and Anorexia Nervosa are the two leading eating disorders in the U.S. The pressure that society puts on physical fitness and the stress from our personal lives can influence or even create eating disorders. Psychological problems are the root of eating disorders. Sometimes when young women experience bouts of depression, obsessive-compulsive anxiety, or worthlessness, they control their diets as a solution.¹

We always read about what happens physically to someone that has anorexia, but what about their psychological health? Research shows that anorexia could be the product of low self-esteem and other behavioral personality traits, such as perfectionism.² This is easily understood when we look at the major emphasis society and the media places on looking slim and trim. The constant association with thinness being beautiful causes more and more people to fall victim to eating disorders. In the U.S. alone, about one out of every 100 young women between the ages of 10 and 20 are starving themselves.³ Personal problems with family and friends can also cause a person to turn to anorexia or bulimia.

Feelings of inadequacy and distress are often related to bulimic patients. Parents that put too much pressure on their children can cause these feelings.

Just being a college student is enough pressure, but the added tension of domineering parents could easily form feelings of inadequacy. In 2002, 4% of college-aged women suffered from bulimia.³

Men are also affected by anorexia and bulimia. Yes guys, believe it or not, males also deal with body image difficulties and develop eating disorders. Ten percent of people with anorexia or bulimia are males.³

So don't let your psychological issues get the best of you. Try to talk your problems out with friends or loved ones. If you need professional help, then be sure to visit Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) in Brotman Hall, Room 226, or call (562) 985-4001.

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1. www.medlineplus.gov
2. www.edsn.asn.com
3. www.anred.com

The Negative Effects of the Following Eating Disorders

Anorexia

- Severe sensitivity to cold
- Loss of menstrual periods
- Dehydration
- Constipation
- Hair loss
- Low blood pressure
- Slow pulse

Bulimia

- Irregular menstrual cycle
- Clammy hands, tremors
- Puffy skin under eyes
- Broken blood vessels in the face
- Loss of dental enamel
- Deterioration of gums
- Bowel infection

Continued from Page 2...Cosmetic enhancement

In 2001, the ASPS reported a total expenditure of nearly \$7 billion spent on cosmetic surgeries in the United States.⁴ In that same year, the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery (ASDS) reported performing nearly 4 million procedures.⁵ Of those who elected cosmetic surgery, the numbers are overwhelmingly female, with more than 5.6 million women (85 percent), but the numbers of men choosing cosmetic enhancements are growing, with more than 1 million (15 percent) having undergone some form of cosmetic surgery in 2002.⁶

While many consider plastic surgery to be an issue of vanity, clearly these numbers show it is a popular remedy for physical imperfections and im-

proving self-esteem. But before anyone selects surgery as a solution, it is critical to ask oneself a few questions before going under the laser or the knife. Is surgery really necessary? Are there alternatives? Are there risks involved? If you are a potential patient, you should also research the performance records of the surgeons before committing to any operation that may permanently change your looks. This is crucial, because while most surgeries have been shown to be successful, there is always the potential for complications.

Ultimately, you may choose cosmetic surgery to improve your appearance. But before you do, take a good look at yourself in the mirror, and then decide whether or not a change to your

outside will really make you feel better on the inside.

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2. www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/pubs/wtloss/wtloss.htm
3. www.plasticsurgery.org (American Society of Plastic Surgeons)
4. www.plasticsurgery.org (American Society of Plastic Surgeons)
5. www.asds-net.org/2001surveyresults.html (American Society for Dermatologic Surgery)
6. www.plasticsurgery.org (American Society of Plastic Surgeons)

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HEALTH RESOURCE CENTER

Editor-in-Chief

Ming-Yu Cheng, M.D., MPM

Assistant Editor

Yumi Lee

Newsletter Team

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Writers

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