



EDENnews

NO 12 Spring 2004

'Promoting Body Satisfaction'

As I begin to write this I note our banner at the top 'Promoting Body Satisfaction' and I am aware of how increasingly difficult it seems to be to do just that.... The increase in the number of 'extreme make-over' shows, the huge amount of media attention being given to 'fighting the obesity epidemic' and the iconic status given in our society to models and celebrities with extremely thin bodies all make the vision of body acceptance seem a long way off at times. This newsletter is focussed on busting some of the myths about the health risks of obesity and relatedly, the dangers of dieting Anyone interested in finding out more may want to check out Paul Campos' latest book The Obesity Myth... or contact us here at EDEN for reference lists and information sheets that critique ideas linking weight to health. We also hold many books on developing Body Trust (eating when hungry—stopping when full, exercising in enjoyable, sustainable ways etc.)... Also in this newsletter check out our new stickers (details on the back page) and 10 very good reasons not to diet. Happy Reading!

Beautiful FAT?

plump Cuddly **Not in this era**
 Curvy **Once was beauty**
 Voluptuous Fullness **today is horror** Dirty
 Chubby Feminine Sexy ugly PIG
 lushness Softness smelly Disgusting
 Foulness
Once was wealth, stability and health
 obese abuse **Now is anathema** NO willpower
 cut Do not be seen Kill
 nightmare hide **Am I your horror story?**
 Lazy Greedy Unworthy
 Glutton No brain
Am I so unacceptable to you?

Services we offer:

1 Garnet Road, Westmere

- Telephone Support
- Support Groups
- Health Promotion Services
- Workshops
- Education & Information to schools, community groups, gyms, health professionals
- Services for Tertiary Students

Are you a big woman with a passion for big women's issues? Do you want to meet with other women to network together EDEN is looking at setting up a group in the new year Ring us for more information.
 Phone 378 9039

E-mail: info@eden.org.nz

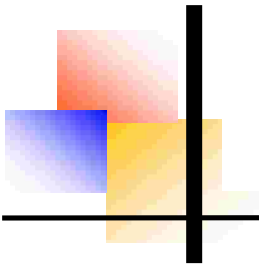
EATING

DIFFICULTIES

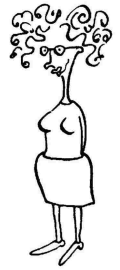
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NETWORK

1 GARNET ROAD, WESTMERE. PO BOX 78 005, AUCKLAND 2. PH 09 378 9039 FAX 09 378 9393



Is anyone else sick of hearing about the 'Obesity Epidemic'?



Here at EDEN we are actively seeking ways to promote health and wellbeing.... We understand that by eating well, exercising regularly in enjoyable and sustainable ways and accepting and loving our bodies (which naturally come in all shapes and sizes), we can be healthier So WHY all the weight loss focus???

There is considerable public health and media attention currently being given to 'reducing obesity', EDEN contends that there are a number of problematic assumptions with this focus, namely

That a reduction in weight for 'overweight' people will improve health status (for individuals and for the country as a whole).

That a reduction in weight is achievable and can be maintained.

That a reduction in weight has no negative health consequences.

That weight status is the primary health determinant

These assumptions are so widely entrenched in popular *and* medicalised understandings about weight that they receive little attention or discussion in public forums despite evidence that challenges these conclusions.

In fact, research indicates that there are actually some health benefits associated with being moderately overweight and that it is a lack of fitness, not fatness per se, that predicts ill health and mortality risk. Studies have also indicated that weight loss is extremely difficult to achieve and maintain, is psychologically taxing, and combined with weight cycling (yo-yo dieting) can actually *increase* the risk of disease and early mortality. Additionally it is well accepted that dieting and restrictive eating is a risk factor for the development of disturbed eating patterns and eating disorders. Ironically, dieting and restricted eating in children has actually been linked with an *increased* risk of weight gain.

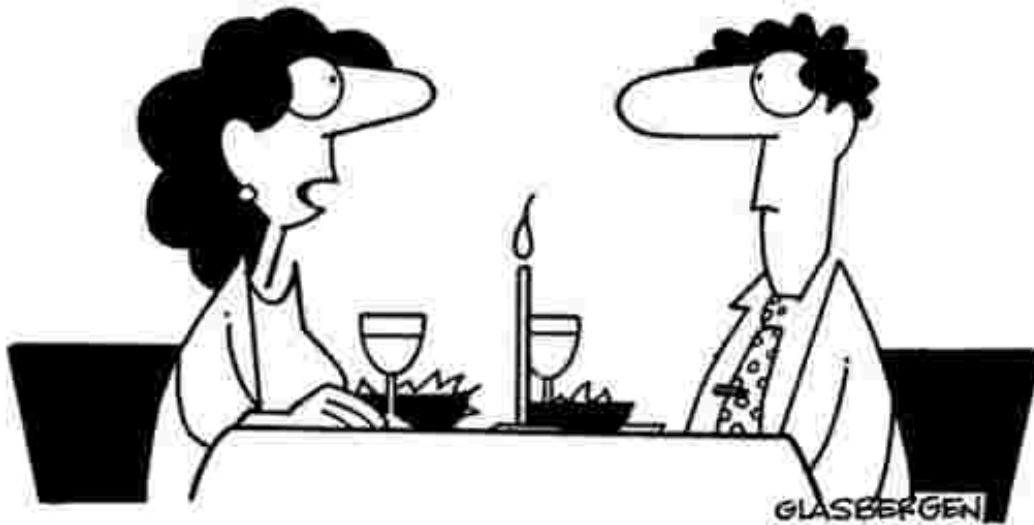
Paul Campos argues that "Weight has very little to do with health except at statistical extremes. A whole host of factors, including fitness and activity levels, socio-economic status, dieting and diet drugs, discrimination in the provision of medical care and social discrimination are far more relevant to health than weight per se". He points out that fat active people are just as healthy as thin active people and far healthier than their skinny, sedentary counterparts.

Furthermore according to Campos attempting to make people thin may do more harm than good—"there's no known way to produce significant long term weight loss in the vast majority of people who wish to achieve this result. The typical prescription—reduced caloric intake—produces weight cycling rather than permanent weight loss. A great deal of evidence suggests that much of the increased health risk associated with 'obesity' is actually a product of dieting, rather than of weight itself"

A study of more than 16,000 children aged 9—14 years showed that regardless of their weight status, children who dieted gained significantly more weight compared to children who never dieted. A second study found the Body Mass Indexes (ie ratio of weight to height) of girls who were frequent dieters versus those who never or rarely dieted were nearly 4 points higher.

It is clearly time for some sanity The war on fat is based on assumptions that if people have a healthy lifestyle they'll be thin, and that thin people are always healthy. However this simply isn't the case.

The good news is that if we enjoy a wide range of nutritious and delicious foods, exercise in enjoyable and sustainable ways and find some peace with our bodies whatever shape or size we may be.... We will be healthier than if we embark on the path of counting calories, restrictive eating, and approaching ourselves with the punitive, self-loathing, critical self-talk that is so essential for the survival of the lucrative diet and weight loss industries.



“I belong to a weight loss support group. We meet once a week and talk each other out of dieting.”

Top 10 reasons not to diet

1. Diets don't work. You lose weight and gain it right back, often regaining more than you lost (weight cycling).
2. Dieting is dangerous and causes many deaths and injuries every year.
3. Diets are expensive and without value.
4. Dieting causes fatigue, light-headedness, saps your energy and strength.
5. Dieting disrupts normal eating, causes bingeing, overeating and chaotic feeding patterns.
6. Dieting increases food preoccupation, so half your day or more is spent thinking about food and weight.
7. Dieting diminishes women, subverting their dreams and ambitions, keeping them playing the anticipation game. There is a lot more to life than this.
8. Dieting stunts the growth and development of young people, mentally, emotionally and physically.
9. Dieting increases size prejudice, makes people more judgmental and critical of themselves and others.
10. Dieting lowers self-esteem and feelings of well-being. Instead, accepting and respecting yourself as you are brings confidence, health and a sense of wellness and wholeness.

EDEN

Services & Support:

If you wish to access the services of EDEN, participate in a support group or visit our drop in centre, please phone us on 378 9039 or email us at info@eden.org.nz

Resources from EDEN ...

Laminated 'Thank you for not talking about your diet' posters are available in several colours from the EDEN office. Various postcards are also available: 'Thank you for not talking about your diet', 'Why make your dreams weight?' and 'Obsession'.

New Resource Available!

EDEN has produced some new luminous stickers—great for magazines in waiting rooms, at home, anywhere!!

Donations requested to cover costs.

EDEN is a non-profit organisation
reliant on grants.
Donations are appreciated.

WARNING
Exposure to
stereotypical
images may be
hazardous to your
body image

Food for thought??
For information contact EDEN
Ph 09 378 9039 or www.eden.org.nz



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Lottery Grants Board
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