Tips for a Healthy Body Image

Don’t:

- Let your body define who or what you are. You are much more than just a body.
- Let obsession with your body keep you from getting closer to others or taking risks.
- Judge others on the basis of appearance, body size, or shape.
- Forget that society changes its ideas of beauty over the years.
- Believe that all thin people are happy with themselves.
- Forget that you are not alone in your pursuit of self-acceptance. It is a life-long process that many people struggle with.
- Be afraid to actually enjoy your body. Don’t look at it as something that you are stuck with.

Do:

- Accept that bodies come in a variety of shapes & sizes. This is what makes us interesting!!!
- Remember that you may be your own worst critic. Others may find you really attractive.
- Expect normal weekly & monthly changes in weight and shape.
- Explore your internal self, emotionally and spiritually. Also look at yourself as a growing, changing human being.
- Explore all the things you have to offer others: recognize your positive qualities.
- Decide how you wish to spend your energy: should pursuing the perfect image occupy most of your time, or would you rather enjoy the people and positive things in your life?
- Be aware of your own weight prejudice. Explore how those feelings may affect your self-esteem.

Tips Inspired by Sarai Walker’s “Building a Better Body Image”
and “10 things you can do” from About-Face.org.

Resources:
National Eating Disorders Association web site: http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/
Body Positive web site: http://www.bodypositive.com/
Weight Control Information Network web site: http://win.niddk.nih.gov/

Reference:

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700.

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu