

Fitness Focus

Effects of Nutrition & Physical Activity

Self-Concept (part1)

Physical Education Standard 4.5 says that 8th grade students should be able to “explain the effects of nutrition and physical activity on: self-concept, weight control and physical performance.” This lesson will examine nutrition and its effect on a person’s self-concept.

Self-concept is learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about them. There are several different components of self-concept: *physical*, *academic* and *social*. The physical aspect of self-concept relates to that which is concrete: what we look like, our gender, height, weight, what kind of clothes we wear, what kind of home we live in, etc. Our academic self-concept relates to how well we do in school or how well we learn. There are two levels: a general academic self-concept of how good we are overall and a set of specific content-related self-concepts that describe how good we are in math, science, language arts, social science, etc. The social self-concept describes how we relate to other people.

Self-concept is not innate, but is developed by the individual through interaction with the environment and reflecting on that interaction. This is important because it indicates that it can be modified or changed. Research shows that self-concept is the basis for all human behavior.

Let’s examine the relationship between nutrition and self-concept. Is it just a matter of having good nutritional habits and that will lead to a healthy self-concept? Do you need to have a healthy self-concept to have good nutritional habits? Is it a little of both? Consider the following nutritional topics:

1. HYDRATION (urine should be light to clear if body is properly hydrated)
 - Regulates body temperature
 - Aids in digestion
 - Transports nutrients to cells & removes waste
2. FRUITS & VEGETABLES (min. of 5 servings a day with variety)
 - Great source of “good/healthy” carbohydrates (energy food)
 - Lower Risk of cardiovascular disease & some cancers
 - Aids in digestion & vision, regulates blood pressure
3. EATING 3-5 SMALLER MEALS...(NOT SKIPPING MEALS)
 - Easier for body to digest & distribute
 - Body & Brain Fuel are always accessible
 - Avoid calorie loading & poor nutritional choices

TURN OVER →

Consider the negative effects of the nutritional topics mentioned on self-concept.

1. DEHYDRATION

- Mental & muscle fatigue
- Poor decision making ability

4. LACK OF FRUITS & VEGETABLES

- Lack of energy
- Digestive problems

3. SKIPPING MEAL

- **Poor performance.** Meal skippers don't perform as well. They accomplish less work, are physically less steady, and are slower at making decisions.
- **Brain drain.** The brain's exclusive fuel, glucose, is compromised within four to six hours if you have not eaten.
- **Calorie loading.** Calorie loading easily occurs if you eat just one meal a day. Eating just one large meal tends to overwhelm your body with calories that it does not need at that moment. It is better to spread the nutrient load.

The negative consequences and their effect on self-concept are obvious. The physical, mental and social problems caused from these would make it difficult to develop a positive self-concept. Healthy choices in these three areas of nutrition, and all the other areas (not covered) of nutrition, significantly increase your chances of developing and maintaining a healthy self-concept.

Lesson Review

1. What is self-concept?
2. Describe the different components of self-concept?
3. How is self-concept developed? Give an example.
4. Describe at least 3 positive contributions listed from the three nutritional areas that you feel would best help a person develop a healthy self-concept.
5. How could dehydration, lack of fruits and vegetables and skipping meals lead to an unhealthy self-concept?
6. Number 1-10. Rank your traits, what you like the most about yourself(#1) to what you like the least(#10) Use a word or phrase.