

Kids: Are you being bullied because of your weight?

Here is a list of the types of bullying experiences that some people go through. Have you ever experienced any of these?

- Being made fun of
- Being called names
- Getting comments about your weight or appearance
- Receiving harassing phone calls, emails, or text messages
- Receiving verbal threats
- Having rumors spread about you
- Being excluded from school or social activities
- Being ignored
- Being humiliated in public
- Being pushed, tripped, or elbowed
- Being physically assaulted
- Being spit on
- Having your property stolen or damaged

If you are experiencing anything like this because of your weight, remember that it's *not* your fault, you *don't* deserve it, and there *is* something you can do about it.

Weight bullying or teasing happens to a lot of people in many different places – in school, at home, and even between friends. Just because it happens a lot doesn't mean it's right. In fact, weight-related bullying is *wrong*. Being teased or bullied because of your weight is just as wrong as being made fun of because of your race, gender, or religion.

Why do people bully about weight?

There are a lot of reasons why some people bully. They may see it as a way of being popular, or making themselves look in-charge and confident. Some bullies do it to get attention or to put on a show for others. They may also be a victim of being bullied themselves, and bullying others makes them feel powerful. Bullies can often be insecure, but they will never let anyone see it. Bullies often don't even think about how it makes their victims feel or understand how wrong their behavior is.

People sometimes make mean comments about weight if they believe that being overweight is a person's fault. In reality, overweight and obesity is caused by a lot of factors that you can't always control. The foods you eat and the activities you do are only a part of what makes up your weight.

No matter why people bully about weight, remember that it's *not* your fault and you *don't* deserve to be treated that way!

For more information on weight bias, please visit www.UConnRuddCenter.org

What happens when people get bullied about their weight?

When people are bullied and teased about their weight, they sometimes feel down and ashamed. This can lead to feelings of depression, low self-esteem, and poor body image. It can make people want to avoid being around others, or stop doing their usual activities. If you are feeling any of these emotions, talk to a family member, teacher, or another adult who can offer support and guidance.

What can you do?

- It's better not to fight back. Bullies want to get a reaction out of you. If you stay calm, ignore them, and walk away, it will become boring for them and they will be more likely to leave you alone in the future.
- Be confident! If you look unsure of yourself, bullies are more likely to pick on you. Hold your head up high and stand tall.
- Don't go somewhere where a bully can find you alone. You are safer when your friends or other people are around.
- Help someone else who is being bullied. You're not only doing the right thing, but you might make a good friend in the process.
- Don't be afraid to tell an adult you trust; they can help you to find a solution or just listen. Tell a teacher, a family member, or even a friend's parent. This is not "tattling". Bullying needs to be taken seriously, and sometimes the best solution is getting help from adults.
- If the person teasing you or making comments about your weight is a friend or family member, let them know that that when they comment about your weight, it makes you feel bad and doesn't help you or motivate you in a positive way.

Check out our other handouts for kids: [What about Weight?](#) and [Web Resources for Kids](#)