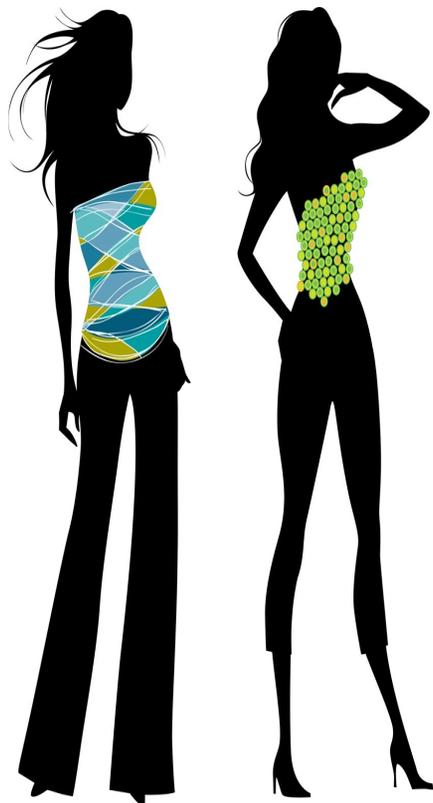


When the media is constantly bombarding children and teens alike with messages about the "ideal" or "perfect" beauty, and uses underweight movie stars, singers, etc.- then it's not hard to ask the question "Does the media influence Anorexia on teenagers?" and come back with a resounding "YES!" When children see these images on television, in magazines, in songs, movies, etc.- then it's no wonder that the rate of eating disorders among teenagers is rising rapidly, and now parents are feverishly searching for an answer.

Instead of blaming themselves, the media and others- it's important to remember that some teenagers are more susceptible to eating disorders than others, and some are going to develop Anorexia or another eating disorder with or without outside influences such as media or peers.



When does the media influence anorexia in teenagers? If one notices television programming and magazines geared specifically for teenagers, they'll notice that it's extremely unusual- rare even- for an actor, actress, or other star to be "over-weight"- or even of a normal weight. From the pre-teen years to the middle-teen years, teenagers are bombarded with messages, whether direct or indirect, of the need to be "perfect" and what "perfect" is.



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MEDIA INFLUENCE ON TEENAGERS



If Marilyn Monroe or Rita Hayworth were around today, they'd be labeled as "fat." What a twist, and a shocking example of how our society has misplaced standards of beauty and "perfection!" Two well-known, absolutely gorgeous, healthy-weight, sex-symbols and icons of beauty- now would be considered "flawed."



And how do we stop the effects of this negative influence? The media has become firmly focused for years, on a person's outer appearance or outer beauty. In the days of Marilyn Monroe and Rita Hayworth, women in the media were portrayed as beautiful, and they weren't "bone thin." This trend has changed over the last several years, and now unless an actress or model is thin to the point of practically being able to see bones, she is criticized as being "fat."



School halls resonate with Eminem's lyrics and giggles about a new "Hattie" in the latest movie, yet teens insist pop culture doesn't affect their behavior. "What goes in must come out" is a fitting phrase for impressionable adolescents. Parents play a critical role in determining what does, or doesn't, influence their teens. The wise parent teaches his teen to be discerning about media choices. Setting harsh, unbending rules may only drive your teen toward negative choices. Accusations of unfairness, "You never let me do anything!" can be avoided with open communication about entertainment choices. Because a teen's mind is still developing, the number one rule of parenting applies: be involved.

