



Spotlight On Health

Let's Talk...

All kids get teased by a brother, sister, or friend at some time and it's not harmful when done in a playful, friendly, mutual way. But when teasing becomes hurtful, unkind and constant, it can cross the line into bullying. Bullying is intentional, persistent aggression and can take on many forms.

Types Of Bullying

- ▶ Verbal: Name calling, teasing
- ▶ Social: Spreading rumors, leaving people out on purpose, breaking up friendships.
- ▶ Physical: Hitting, punching, shoving, kicking.
- ▶ Cyberbullying: Using the internet, cell phones or other digital technology to harm others.

It is important to take bullying seriously and not just brush it off. It's a BIG problem to many children. Bullies can make kids feel frightened, sick, embarrassed, hurt, lonely, not wanting to play outside, or go to school. Bullying bothers everyone, not just the kids who are getting picked on.

There are many reasons that kids bully others. Some bullies torment others because that is the way they have been treated. They come from families or settings where people regularly get angry, shout and call names. Some TV shows promote meanness. Some bullies need a victim to feel more important or popular or in control.

How To Combat Bullying

- ▶ First of all - tell an adult. Find someone you trust and tell them what is happening. Teachers, principals, parents can all try to help you. This is not tattling, bullying is wrong. Here are some ideas.
- ▶ Avoid the bully and use the buddy system. Take another way home instead of walking the same way if you can. Buddy up with a friend on the bus, in the hallways or at recess, wherever the bully is. Always offer to do the same for a friend in need.
- ▶ It is normal to get upset by the bully. Practice not reacting by crying, getting angry or showing how upset you are. That is what the bullies thrive on. Tell the bully "No! Stop it!" in a loud voice. Keep your "poker face" on until you are clear of danger. Be brave, take a deep breath, walk away (or run if you have to) to a safe place.

▶ Remove the incentives. If they are demanding your lunch money - carry your lunch and tell a supervising adult.

▶ Stay with friends who will help you build your confidence. Get involved with clubs or sports programs. Find activities that can help you learn and feel confident and strong. Maybe it's a self-defense class teaching martial arts.

▶ If you see another child getting bullied at your school, tell an adult! Kids can protect and stand up for each other by telling a bully to stop teasing or scaring someone else, and then walk away together.

▶ Don't bully back. Don't hit, kick or push back to deal with someone bullying you or your friends. That just satisfies the bully and it's dangerous as someone can really get hurt. Get help from an adult.

Bullies usually end up in trouble. If they keep acting out they will have fewer friends sooner or later. Every kid has a choice of how to behave and act. Bullies can learn to change their behavior. Some kids who bully eventually realize that they don't get the respect or friends they want by threatening others. Teachers, counselors and parents can help them too. Bullies can change if they learn to use their power in positive ways. Some bullies turn into great kids and some never learn how to do that.

No one needs to put up with a bully's behavior. If you're having trouble, talk to someone you can trust. Everyone has the right to feel safe.

