

### Dieting

1. Collect one or two diets outlined in women's magazines.
2. Analyse their nutritional value compared to the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
3. Consider whether the diet could form the basis for a long-term eating plan.
4. Outline the most effective way to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight. Explain why.
5. Share your diets with three or four class members and rank them from the most nutritious to the least nutritious.

## Body image and dieting

Throughout our lives we are exposed to messages about what are socially acceptable male and female body shapes and sizes. We hear comments expressed by family, peers and celebrities. We see media images of female models who are tall, slender and attractive and male models who are muscular and good looking. These images are often associated with happiness, success, popularity and health, while images of fat people are linked to negative stereotypes such as laziness, sadness and poor intelligence. All these messages influence our beliefs about how males and females should look, and this affects our own **body image** — our mental picture of what we look like and how we feel about our body.

A positive body image is important for both physical and mental health because it contributes to better self-esteem, self-acceptance and healthier eating patterns.

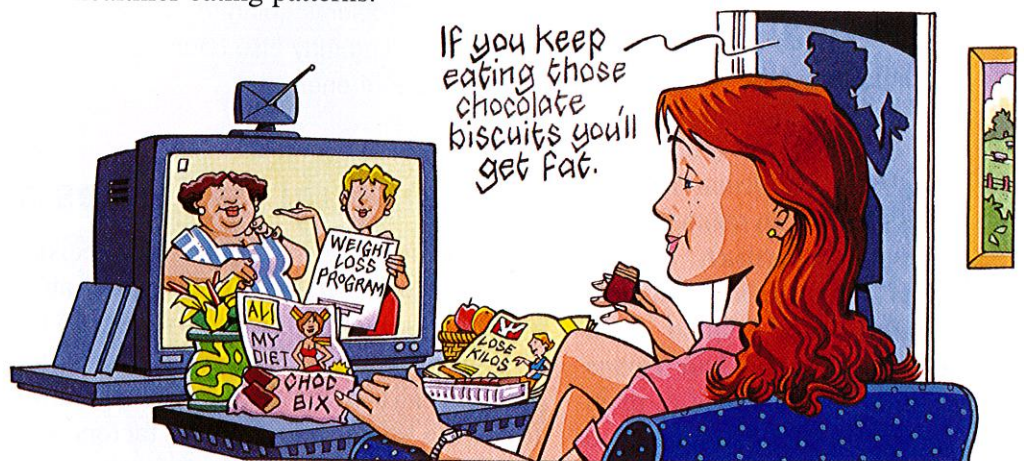
[ **Body image** is the mental picture that you have of what you look like and how you feel about your body. ]

▶ **Worksheet 6.2:**  
It's alright to be me

### HEALTH FACT

Anorexia affects two out of every 100 adolescent girls. Most anorexia sufferers are female, but males can also experience anorexia. Bulimia affects one in six female teenagers. As with anorexia, more females than males suffer from bulimia.

*Source:* Department of Health and Aged Care, New South Wales, 'What is an eating disorder?' brochure, Sydney



**FIGURE 6.7** Our body image is influenced by messages we receive from various sources.

## Eating disorders

Many people are concerned about their body shape or weight, but this concern does not prevent them from leading happy and healthy lives. However, for some people, dissatisfaction with their body image contributes to a strong desire to change their body through dangerous eating, excessive