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It takes a team to lose weight

As a pediatrician who recently opened a comprehensive weight-management and body-image treatment center for children, teens and young adults, I was thrilled to see your article ["", April 20]. I wholeheartedly agree with the necessity of building a team to assist with weight management.

Young people, however, must be viewed through somewhat different lenses. Children and teens are uniquely susceptible in mind and in body to the effects of "weight loss gone awry."

In this age group, weight loss without proper professional supervision may precipitate eating disorders, stunting of growth and severely strained relationships between parents and children. Additionally, when children and teens turn to the Internet, the "mouse click away" gives access to sites that actually instruct and encourage what could be life-threatening "solutions" to weight loss.

Children and teens do need a team approach for weight management as do adults -- but it should be a team of professionals qualified to manage their delicate issues. Parents are understandably desperate for assistance with their overweight children. Despite our best intentions, however, without proper guidance, we can inadvertently put our children at risk.

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