# TikTok's #SkinnyTok trend fuels mental health crisis through glamorised weight-loss and drugs



The emergence of #SkinnyTok on social media platforms has ignited significant concern among mental health advocates and body positivity supporters. Jenny Stevens, the deputy features editor at the Guardian, recently highlighted this dangerous trend, noting a surge of influencers chronicling extreme weight-loss journeys on TikTok. In an interview with Helen Pidd, Stevens expressed her alarm at the impact this content has on young viewers, stating, “I’ve looked through that hashtag and I think, wow, some of these people are really, really unwell.” The TikTok algorithm, according to her, seems to thrive on sensationalised narratives, pushing such material to impressionable audiences, thus exacerbating issues surrounding body image and disordered eating.

This environment has been intensified by the rising popularity of weight-loss drugs such as Ozempic and Wegovy, which influencers are now promoting as shortcuts to idealised body shapes. Reports have surfaced detailing how these medications, while effective for some, come with significant risks and ethical dilemmas when marketed on social media. For instance, influencers like Kelsey and Ashley have shared their personal journeys with these drugs, but the conversation often glosses over the potential health implications inherent in their use. The glamourisation of such medical solutions raises pressing questions about responsibility regarding content shared online and whether creators are fully aware of the consequences their endorsements may carry.

The re-emergence of strict ideals of thinness has cyclically affected perceptions of health and fitness. Gina Tonic, author of "Greedy Guts," connected the contemporary fixation on thinness to broader societal shifts triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic. In her view, the pandemic brought health to the forefront, reinforcing associations between thinness and well-being. She stated, “Fatness is automatically associated with being unhealthy and has been for decades,” indicating a troubling narrative that sidelights those who do not fit the conventional mould of health. The fixation on weight has impacted not just individuals’ self-image but has also led to a diminished visibility of the body positivity movement, which once championed diversity in body shapes and sizes.

The psychological repercussions of the climate surrounding #SkinnyTok are troubling. Recent studies have indicated that consistent exposure to such content can lead to poor body image and heightened anxiety among users, particularly adolescents. Various articles articulate concerns that the elevation of an unrealistic 'thin' ideal fosters a toxic diet culture. This raises vital considerations for parents and educators who grapple with how to address these pressures in their communities. Promoting positive body image and encouraging discussions around mental health are crucial in counteracting the damaging narratives propagated by trends like #SkinnyTok.

Social media platforms are beginning to recognise their role in perpetuating these harmful trends. TikTok has initiated a crackdown on content that glorifies disordered eating, aiming to enforce new community guidelines that prioritise mental well-being. While these steps are commendable, the effectiveness of such measures requires further scrutiny as many creators attempt to navigate the fine line between sharing personal stories and inadvertently promoting unhealthy behaviours.

In conclusion, the dialogue surrounding #SkinnyTok is multifaceted, encompassing themes of health, body image, and media responsibility. The promotion of extreme thinness and weight-loss solutions continues to pose a significant risk, calling for concerted efforts from individuals, social media platforms, and society as a whole to champion body positivity, diverse beauty standards, and mental health awareness in the digital age.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2025/may/30/what-happened-to-body-positivity-podcast), [[3]](https://www.openprivilege.com/latest-news/world/skinnytok-and-its-harmful-effects-on-mental-health-67ff70e7cf1f9dc896a25ccb)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.mmm-online.com/home/channel/meet-tiktoks-glp-1-influencers-ozempic-wegovy-mounjaro/), [[6]](https://www.teenvogue.com/story/liv-schmidts-tiktok-ban-diet-talk-online)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2025/may/30/what-happened-to-body-positivity-podcast), [[4]](https://www.wral.com/lifestyle/family/parents-skinnytok-body-image-pressure/), [[5]](https://time.news/skinnytok-tiktoks-resurgence-of-thin-idealization/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://time.news/skinnytok-tiktoks-resurgence-of-thin-idealization/), [[7]](https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2024-04-25/tiktok-weight-loss-guidelines)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2025/may/30/what-happened-to-body-positivity-podcast> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.mmm-online.com/home/channel/meet-tiktoks-glp-1-influencers-ozempic-wegovy-mounjaro/> - This article discusses the emergence of TikTok influencers promoting weight loss through GLP-1 medications like Ozempic, Wegovy, and Mounjaro. It highlights creators such as Kelsey and Ashley, who share their weight loss journeys and experiences with these drugs. The piece also addresses the potential risks and ethical considerations of promoting pharmaceutical weight loss solutions on social media platforms.
3. <https://www.openprivilege.com/latest-news/world/skinnytok-and-its-harmful-effects-on-mental-health-67ff70e7cf1f9dc896a25ccb> - This article examines the rise of 'SkinnyTok' on TikTok, a trend that glorifies extreme thinness and restrictive dieting. It discusses the impact of such content on mental health, particularly among young users, leading to poor body image and increased mental health concerns. The piece also highlights the perpetuation of toxic diet culture and the risk of disordered eating behaviors associated with prolonged exposure to SkinnyTok content.
4. <https://www.wral.com/lifestyle/family/parents-skinnytok-body-image-pressure/> - This article explores the 'SkinnyTok' trend on TikTok, where creators promote extreme thinness and share restrictive eating content. It discusses the impact of this trend on body image pressures among young users and the role of parents and educators in addressing these issues. The piece emphasizes the importance of promoting body positivity and healthy lifestyle choices to counteract the harmful effects of such trends.
5. <https://time.news/skinnytok-tiktoks-resurgence-of-thin-idealization/> - This article delves into the 'SkinnyTok' trend on TikTok, focusing on the resurgence of thin idealization and its impact on mental health. It discusses the potential dangers of exposure to such content, including increased anxiety, depression, and a higher risk of developing eating disorders. The piece also touches on the role of social media platforms in addressing these issues and the importance of promoting positive body image.
6. <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/liv-schmidts-tiktok-ban-diet-talk-online> - This article covers the banning of TikTok creator Liv Schmidt, known for promoting extreme dieting and weight loss content. It discusses the broader issue of rising weight loss and dieting content on social media platforms like TikTok, driven in part by the popularity of weight loss drugs like Wegovy and Ozempic. The piece also addresses the impact of such content on body positivity and the need for responsible content creation.
7. <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2024-04-25/tiktok-weight-loss-guidelines> - This article reports on TikTok's initiative to crack down on content that promotes disordered eating and dangerous weight-loss habits. It discusses the platform's updated community guidelines aimed at promoting positive body image and mental health. The piece also highlights the prevalence of weight loss videos on TikTok and the role of social media platforms in addressing harmful content.