



## TIPPING THE SCALES IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

*Momo Hosokawa, a licensed international nutrition supplement advisor and expert on preventive medicine, is on a mission to promote and explore the state of women's health in Japan. Her primary target? Underweight women.*

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**W**HILE women in many countries struggle with obesity issues, the scales in Japan are tipping in the other direction. Neither trend is healthy.

Momo Hosokawa wants to change the way people

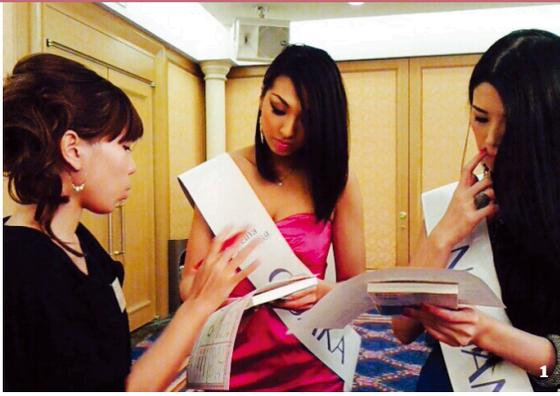
understand women's health. As the president of Luvtelli, a company whose name combines the words "love" and "intelligence," Hosokawa is focusing on research, education and the promotion of preventive medicine for women.

Her interest in preventive medicine was first piqued when she was eighteen years old and both her parents were diagnosed with cancer. Rather than just treating illnesses, Hosokawa wanted to discover ways to preclude illness through healthy living. Since preventive medicine was not commonly studied in Japan at the time, she traveled to the United States at age twenty, where she was deeply impressed by American nutrigenomics (the study of the effects of food and food constituents on genes) and public health. During her time in the U.S., Hosokawa learned that the percentage of underweight women in Japan was statistically high, and she wanted to know why.

In 2009, Hosokawa established Luvtelli Tokyo & New York. "I saw that the specialists from the fields of treatment, nutrition, rehabilitation and medicine worked side-by-side in teams free from internal hierarchy in America," Hosokawa recalls. "I wanted to create a similar team of people with knowledge in these fields to work together to contribute to healthcare in Japan." Luvtelli was a way for Hosokawa to promote preventive medicine in Japan while also doing research to further understand the issues affecting Japanese women.

From August 2014 to March 2015, Luvtelli collaborated with Mitsubishi Estate on the Will Conscious Marunouchi Project to invite women working in Tokyo's Marunouchi district to visit their health facilities for evaluation and counseling. The data collected from 1,022 women showed Hosokawa that the majority did not have a basic understanding of their own health or bodies. Many women in Japan believe that simply being slim or even thin is healthy.

"We asked these women if they knew the health risks associated with a low BMI and low body fat percentage, and about 60 percent had no



knowledge of the dangers,” she reports. “When we explained the risks of being underweight and asked if they would change their health habits, though, about 87 percent said they would. It’s an issue of lack of education.”

Hosokawa was also concerned that working women generally do not eat breakfast. Combined with their high intake of alcohol and fried food, this places them at a high risk of dietary imbalance, meaning they are not getting proper nutrition. She believes that not just education but also promotion is necessary to improve women’s health. “Companies need take part in their employees’ health, such as by providing exercise time and breakfast at the office, or healthier options for office snacks,” Hosokawa insists. “Education and promotion for health and prevention should also be readily available, such as articles in the media and campaigns.”

Since 2011, Hosokawa has also been supporting the contestants in the Miss Universe Japan competition. As the beauty camp nutrition consultant, Hosokawa was first surprised to see the low BMI of some of the contestants, as well as their misunderstanding of dietary habits and nutrition. In some cases, Hosokawa was the first person to tell them that it’s okay to eat.

“Working with the contestants for three or four months, I educated them on the connection between health and beauty, and counseled them on eating balanced meals and exercising more,” she says. “Though at the camp they now actually eat more and gain muscle weight, they appear thinner and have gotten healthier as their nutritional situation has improved.” Hosokawa



has been happy to find that more and more of the contestants have even been pursuing nutrition-related studies by the time the camp has ended.

Hosokawa believes that continuing her process of education and promotion with underweight young women will eventually enable her to contribute to the health of newborn children as well, to which end she is now involved in research and nutritional education with pregnant women. Her next step, however, is to expand the breadth of Luvtelli’s operations to continue collecting data from working women beyond the greater Tokyo area.

“The diet and exercise habits of people will differ by area,” she says. “For example, those living in Hokkaido may have more fish in their diet than those from different regions. But first we need to collect data to determine the issues in each area and then find ways to run proper health campaigns.” **7**

- 1 Beauty camp nutrition consultant Hosokawa with Miss Universe Japan contestants
- 2 Luvtelli’s Hosokawa promotes proper nutrition in a variety of media
- 3 Hosokawa’s books feature recipes for working women that focus on nutrients and ingredients they tend to lack