

EATING DISORDERS

What are Eating Disorders?

Eating disorders are not just about food, weight, appearance, or willpower; they are serious and potentially life-threatening illnesses. Young people with eating disorders see their self-worth determined by their body shape, weight and their ability to control these factors, causing significant disruption in their lives.

Breaking Stereotypes

Despite the stereotype that eating disorders only occur in women, about one in three people struggling with an eating disorder is male; however, men are much less likely to seek treatment. The good news is that once individuals seek help, they show positive responses.

Signs & Symptoms

BEHAVIOR

- Dieting behaviors (fasting, counting calories, and avoidance of food groups)
- Binge eating or hoarding of food
- Vomiting and laxative use
- Excessive and obsessive exercising
- Obsessive food selection, preparation, and eating
- Lying and avoiding questions about eating and weight
- Overly focused on body shape and weight

PHYSICAL

- Weight loss/fluctuations
- Sensitive to cold
- Changes in periods for girls
- Swelling of the cheeks or jaws
- Fainting

PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Preoccupation with food
- Dissatisfied with body
- Tense around meal times
- Depression, irritability, and anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Rigid thinking around food and eating
- Feelings of distress, guilt, shame or disgust



safespace

a youth engagement organization
dedicated to changing the way young
people think about mental health issues.

Types of Eating Disorders

- **Anorexia nervosa:** Significant weight loss due to reduction of food intake and an overwhelming fear of gaining weight.
- **Bulimia nervosa:** A cycle of 'binge' eating (uncontrollably eating large amounts of food) followed by vomiting, laxatives, not eating for long periods of time.
- **Binge eating disorder:** Rapidly eating large amounts of food but not taking actions to rid of the food.
- **Other specified feeding and eating disorder:** Eating and body difficulties causing significant distress and interference with daily life.

What to Do if You or Your Friend May Have an Eating Disorder

Many teens with eating disorders often feel that their experiences aren't bad enough, or they aren't thin enough to need professional help. No matter what a person weighs, how much or little they eat, anybody experiencing unhealthy eating patterns and distress about how they look, should talk with their family, doctor or therapist.

Self-Help Tips

If you think you may be developing signs of unhealthy eating habits, there are lots of things that you can do:

- S** – Seek support from people you trust
- T** – Track your progress
- R** – Reconnect with who you are
- O** – Open up about your feelings
- N** – Nourish your mind and body
- G** – Get back up

Useful Websites & Phone Numbers

National Eating Disorders Association

(800) 931-2237

www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

Crisis Text Line

Text HOME to 741741 in the US for FREE 24/7 crisis support.

www.crisistextline.org