

# Your Health and Safety Matters!



**February is about:**

## *Eating Disorders Awareness and Screening Month*

### **Warning Signs of an Eating Disorder**

Before you can address and treat a problem, you must identify the problem. Warning signs of an eating disorder include:

#### **Alterations in Weight**

- Unusually marked weight loss. If the person weighs less than 85 percent of their ideal body weight and exhibits other characteristic signs of an eating disorder, this person can be diagnosed with Anorexia Nervosa.

- Patients can still be close to, at, or even above their ideal body weight and still have an eating disorder. This is fairly often seen in bingeing and purging behaviors typical of patients diagnosed with Bulimia Nervosa.

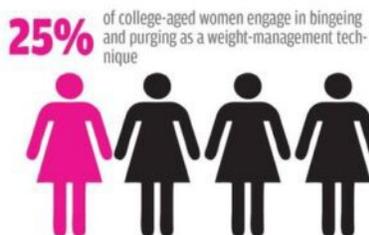
## Preoccupation with Body Image

- May spend an inordinate amount of time looking in the mirror.
- Makes negative comments about her physical appearance and insists that she is overweight.
- May become preoccupied with certain celebrities and models on the Internet and magazines and compare themselves unfavorably to them.
- Wears baggy clothing to hide their body shape.

## Eating Disorders Statistics

### Students:

- According to the *National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders*, 95% of those who have eating disorders are between the **ages of 12 and 25.8**



The mortality rate associated with anorexia nervosa is 12 times higher than the death rate associated with all causes of death for **females 15-24 years old.**

[http://www.yanderhillinstitute.com/life/college\\_culture/article\\_2ba9bc42-bd4c-11e3-8afd-0017a436237d](http://www.yanderhillinstitute.com/life/college_culture/article_2ba9bc42-bd4c-11e3-8afd-0017a436237d)  
<http://www.anad.org/get-information/about-eating-disorders/eating-disorders-statistics/>

## Disruptions in Eating Patterns

- Stops eating with the family
- Develops strong dislikes to previously enjoyed foods
- Preoccupied with counting calories and fat grams
- Eats noticeably smaller portions or refuses to eat at all
- Starts bingeing on certain foods
- Drinks excessive amounts of water and caffeine to suppress appetite
- Goes to the bathroom after meals to vomit what they just ate

- May develop eating rituals such as:
  - Chewing for long periods of time before swallowing
  - Cutting food into small portions
  - Not allowing different foods to touch
  - Moving food around on the plate
  - Taking a long time to eat
  - Hiding food into napkins to throw away later



## Preoccupation with Nutritional Content of Foods

- Classifies foods as good or bad, healthy or unhealthy, safe or unsafe
- Searches out organic, low-fat diet foods
- Frequently visits Internet web sites focused on nutrition
- May suddenly decide that they are going to become vegetarian, vegan, etc.

## Changes in Exercise Patterns

- Becomes preoccupied with physical fitness
- Spends hours exercising in a ritualistic, rigid manner
- Talks of the number of calories that they burned and the time they spent exercising
- Becomes perturbed if their exercise routine is disrupted and eats even less to compensate

## Physical Eating Disorder Symptoms

- Fainting spells from malnutrition and dehydration
- Chapped lips and grey skin
- Hair loss
- Irregular or absent menstrual cycles
- Disrupted sleep patterns
- Musculoskeletal injuries and pain from excessive exercise
- Dental erosions from self-induced vomiting.
- Chronic constipation, gastro-esophageal reflux, and other gastro-intestinal problems
- Markedly low blood pressure and pulse
- Prone to upper respiratory infections
- Low energy
- Overall poor health



## What Are the First Steps To Recovery?

If you, or someone you know and love, fits a pattern described above, it is important to get help as soon as possible. An eating disorder can quickly take on a life of its own and lead to a downward spiral of:

- Functional disruptions
- Broken relationships
- Loss of educational and occupational opportunities
- Deterioration in health
- Possible premature death

The treatment process can be started by contacting the person's primary care physician for a physical evaluation, including laboratory studies and an EKG, and ask for or initiate finding the appropriate level of treatment for the eating disorder. This may be a therapist that is comfortable working with eating disorders, an outpatient eating-disorder program, or even an in-patient facility that specializes in eating disorders.

Because eating disorders can be successfully treated, especially when they are caught early, little can be gained—and much can be lost—if one takes a wait-and-see attitude towards this problem. Get help as soon as possible.

### **Resources for Eating Disorders:**

- <https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-eating-disorders>
- [https:// www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/general-statistics](https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/general-statistics)
- <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/learn/general-information/what-are-eating-disorders>
- <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/eating-disorders/default.htm>

- <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/eating-disorders/index.shtml>
- <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/eating-disorders-among-children.shtml>

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