

Did you know?

4 out of 10 Americans have either suffered or have known someone who has suffered from an eating disorder



Eating Disorder Handout

Eating disorders involve serious disturbances in eating behavior, such as extreme and unhealthy reduction of food intake or severe overeating, as well as feelings of distress or extreme concern about body shape or weight. The four most common eating disorders are Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Binge Eating Disorder, and Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorders (OSFED). Eating disorders currently affect approximately 25 million Americans, in which approximately 25% are male. Anorexia has the highest mortality rate among all psychological disorders.

Eating disorders do not discriminate between sex, class, race or age. They can and do happen to anyone. Contrary to popular belief, an eating disorder is not based on food. There are several contributing factors that may lead to the emergence of an eating disorder although no defined cause has been established. Contributing factors include: Biological factors (Eating disorders often run in families. The risk of developing an eating disorder is 50-80% determined by genetics), Social factors (unrealistic pressures to obtain the "perfect" body; the constant influx of images of perfection; and narrow definitions of beauty), Psychological factors (substantial comorbidity with other mental health disorders - ie. depression, anxiety, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, low self-esteem; and feelings of lack of control), and Interpersonal factors (history of abuse; being teased for size or weight; traumatic life event(s); and difficulty expressing feelings and emotions).

An eating disorder can go unnoticed for a significant amount of time, and often, if it is recognized, denial usually follows, leaving the disorder still untreated.

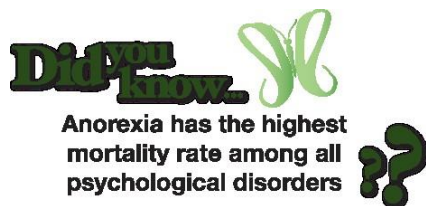
If you suspect that you or someone you know has developed an eating disorder, please do not deny that a problem exists and try to get specialized, professional help as soon as possible. Learn about eating disorders and do not be afraid to talk to someone about your situation. *Major health hazards may occur if an eating disorder goes undetected and/or untreated.* Please know that help is available and recovery is definitely possible.



Anorexia Nervosa is an eating disorder characterized by self-induced starvation and excessive weight loss. According to Dr. Thomas Insel, Director of National Institute of Mental Health, "Research tells us that Anorexia is a brain disease with severe metabolic effects on the entire body." While Anorexia is the 3rd most common chronic illness among adolescents, eating disorders do not discriminate between age, gender, race or class — no one is immune.

Warning Signs May Include

- Significant weight loss
- Distorted body image
- Intense fear/anxiety about gaining weight
- Preoccupation with weight, calories, food, etc.
- Feelings of guilt after eating
- Denial of low weight
- High levels of anxiety and/or depression
- Low self-esteem
- Self-injury
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Excuses for not eating/denial of hunger
- Food rituals Intense, dramatic mood swings
- Pale appearance/yellowish skin-tone
- Thin, dull, and dry hair, skin, and nails
- Cold intolerance/hypothermia
- Fatigue/fainting
- Abuse of laxatives, diet pills, or diuretics
- Excessive and compulsive exercise





Bulimia Nervosa is an eating disorder characterized as bingeing (excessive or compulsive consumption of food) and purging (getting rid of food). Symptoms may include repeated episodes of bingeing and purging, eating beyond the point of fullness, feeling out of control during a binge, inappropriate compensatory behaviors following a binge, frequent dieting, and extreme concern with body weight and shape.

Warning Signs May Include:

- Bingeing and purging
- Secretive eating and/or missing food
- Visits to the bathroom after meals
- Preoccupation with food
- Weight fluctuations
- Self-injury
- Excessive and compulsive exercise regimes — despite fatigue, illness, or injury
- Abuse of laxatives, diet pills, and/or diuretics
- Swollen parotid glands in cheeks and neck
- Discoloration and/or staining of the teeth
- Broken blood vessels in eyes and/or face
- Calluses on the back of the hands/knuckles from self-induced vomiting
- Sore throat
- Heartburn/reflux
- Feelings of shame and guilt
- Self-criticism and low self-esteem
- High levels of anxiety and/or depression

Did you know?

Up to 19 percent of college-aged girls struggle with Bulimia





Binge Eating Disorder is characterized as recurring episodes of eating significantly more food in a short period of time than most people would eat under similar circumstances, with episodes marked by feelings of lack of control. This disorder is associated with marked distress and occurs, on average, at least once a week over three months (American Psychiatric Association). BED is the most common eating disorder in the United States. An estimated 3.5% of women, 2% of men, and 30% to 40% of those seeking weight loss treatments can be clinically diagnosed with BED.

Warning Signs May Include

- Eating large quantities of food, without purging behaviors, when not hungry
- Sense of lack of control over eating
- Eating until uncomfortably/painfully full
- Weight gain/fluctuations
- Feelings of shame and guilt
- Self-medicating with food
- Eating alone/secretive eating
- Hiding food
- High levels of anxiety and/or depression
- Low self-esteem



For Loved Ones

Eating disorders do not only affect the individual who is suffering, but those around them as well. Loved ones desperately want to help their friend/family member, but often anything they say will be met with anger, frustration, denial, or avoidance.

Do Not Deny a Problem Exists!

It can be difficult to believe a loved one is capable of hurting himself/herself by means of an eating disorder. If your loved one displays signs and symptoms from the previous pages, seek help immediately. *Early intervention greatly increases the likelihood of recovery.* Treatment may include in-patient or partial hospitalization, or family, group, and individual therapy. Physicians and nutritionists will be a part of the treatment team as well.

It is also important that you, the family and friends of someone going through an eating disorder, get help and support for yourselves. Please consider attending family therapy and/or a family and friends support group. It is crucial that you maintain your physical and emotional health so you can help your loved one when he/she needs you.

Warning Signs (May Include)

- Distorted Body Image
- Binging and purging
- Secretive eating/missing food
- Intense, dramatic mood swings
- Visits to the bathroom after meals
- Tooth decay
- Disgust and shame after overeating
- Complaints of being cold
- A high need for control
- Absences of three consecutive menstrual cycles in **post-menarcheal** females
- Avoids eating in public or in front of others
- Swollen glands in neck and puffiness in cheeks
- Excessive and compulsive exercise regimes
- Hides food in anticipation of a binge
- Constant sore throat
- Feels like he/she has no control over food
- Hair loss, paleness, and dizziness
- Wearing loose or multiple layers of clothing
- Broken blood vessels in eyes
- Abuse of laxatives, diet pills and/or diuretics
- Very poor self-esteem

Where to Get Help



www.edreferral.com/

The Center for HOPE
of NOVA

info@centerforhopeofnova.com



reflectionsed.com/



Potomac Behavioral Solutions

www.pbshealthcare.com/eating-disorders/

Organizations



The Academy for Eating Disorders is a global professional association committed to leadership in eating disorders research, education, treatment, and prevention.

www.aedweb.org/



The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting individuals and families affected by eating disorders. We campaign for prevention, improved access to quality treatment, and increased research funding to better understand and treat eating disorders. We work with partners and volunteers to develop programs and tools to help everyone who seeks assistance.

NEDA supports individuals and families affected by eating disorders, and serves as a catalyst for prevention, cures and access to quality care.

www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/



The National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders, Inc. is a non-profit (501 c 3) corporation that seeks to prevent and alleviate the problems of eating disorders, especially including anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder. ANAD advocates for the development of healthy attitudes, bodies, and behaviors. ANAD promotes eating disorder awareness, prevention and recovery through supporting, educating, and connecting individuals, families and professionals.

www.anad.org/

Source: Academy for Eating Disorders

This information is provided in compliance with *Code of Virginia §22.1-273.2*