

Eating Disorders

Quick Facts

Eating disorders involve serious disturbances in eating, such as extreme reduction of food or severe overeating, as well as extreme concern about body shape or type. Eating disorders are not due to a failure of will or behavior; rather, they are real, treatable illnesses in which certain eating patterns take on a life of their own.

Effects of eating disorders

People who suffer from eating disorders can experience a wide range of physical health complications, including serious heart conditions and kidney failure that may lead to death. Therefore, it is critically important to recognize eating disorders as real and treatable diseases.

Treatment

Eating disorders can be treated and a healthy weight can be restored. Eating disorders often require medical care, psychosocial interventions, nutritional counseling, and, when appropriate, medication. At the time of diagnosis, the clinician must determine whether the person is in immediate danger, requiring hospitalization. The sooner these disorders are diagnosed, the better the outcomes are likely to be.

The main types of eating disorders are Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia.

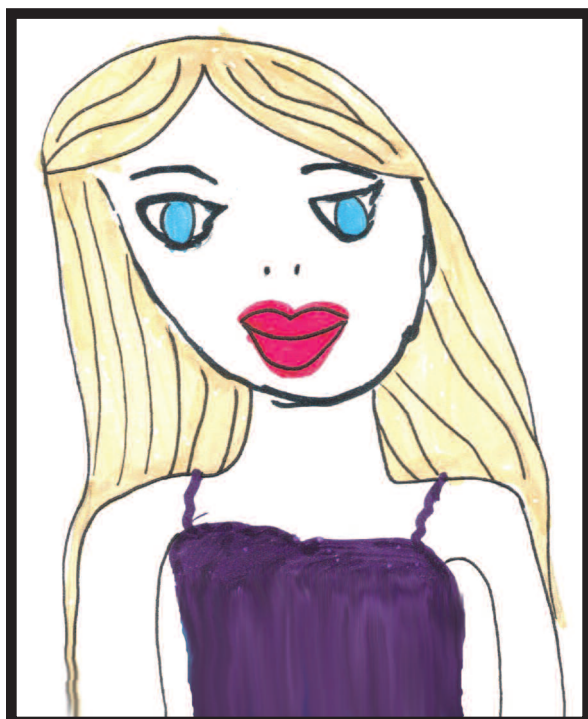
Anorexia Nervosa

People with Anorexia see themselves as overweight even though they are dangerously thin.

Bulimia

People with Bulimia regularly go on eating binges and then purge (self-induced vomiting or misuse of laxatives or other medications), fast, or exercise excessively.

If you think you or someone you know may be experiencing an eating disorder, talk to a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult. Help is available.



Signs of eating disorders often include:

- Intense fear of gaining weight
- Frequent trips to the bathroom
- Avoiding snacks
- Avoiding activities that include food
- Hiding food
- Perfectionist attitude
- Self-deprecating statements
- Irritability, anxiety, and mood swings

Have an idea for a story, poem, painting, drawing, poster, or photograph that has to do with mental health? **Open•Up**, a literary and visual art magazine created by and for artists ages 5 -21, is now accepting submissions! Go to www.macmh.org for submission guidelines.

