



Eating Disorder Facts

What is an eating disorder?

An eating disorder is a serious and life-threatening mental health condition characterized by a consistent disruption of normal eating behavior that results in problems with physical health and/or psychosocial functioning.

Common types of eating disorders

- **Anorexia nervosa:** People with anorexia nervosa restrict the types and amount of food they eat. This often but not always results in significant weight loss or trouble maintaining an appropriate body weight.
- **Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID):** This disorder occurs when a person restricts the amount or types of food eaten, but this avoidance is not because of distress about body shape, weight, or size. People with ARFID are avoidant of eating because of significant fears related to eating (e.g., choking) or aversion to sensory characteristics of food (e.g., taste, smell, texture).
- **Binge eating disorder:** Binge eating disorder involves repeatedly eating a much larger amount of food than normal within a relatively short period of time combined with a perceived loss of control during the binge. People often eat more rapidly and until they are uncomfortably full. They often feel guilty after the binge is done and want to eat alone because they are ashamed by how much they are eating.
- **Bulimia nervosa:** Like binge eating disorder, bulimia nervosa is characterized by recurrent episodes of binge eating. But to compensate for the bingeing, the person engages in repeated behaviors to prevent gaining weight, including self-induced vomiting, taking laxatives or diuretics, fasting, or excessive exercise.
- **Orthorexia:** A person with orthorexia has an extreme preoccupation with eating in the healthiest possible manner. In many cases, the person eats only a very limited range of foods that does not sufficiently meet their nutrient needs.
- **Unspecified eating disorders:** An unspecified eating disorder is when a person is demonstrating disruptive eating behaviors common with other eating disorder symptoms but does not meet the full criteria for any single eating disorder.

Eating disorder symptoms

The symptoms of eating disorders can vary by person, age, and the type of eating disorder, but common symptoms include:

- Preoccupation with weight and/or body shape
- Avoiding eating certain foods due to fearing that something bad could happen
- Feeling out of control over the amount of food eaten one or more times a week
- Worrying frequently about the nutritional content of different foods
- Feeling intensely disgusted or anxious when looking at your body or seeing it in the mirror
- Frequently avoiding eating because of disliking the taste, smell, or texture of foods
- Feeling guilty or upset after eating an unusually large amount of food one or more times a week
- Intentionally making yourself vomit or exercise excessively to prevent gaining weight
- Consistently anxious when eating food or drinking liquids
- Feeling a need to check the appearance of your body often throughout the day

What causes eating disorders and who's at risk?

A combination of biological, psychological, and environmental factors contribute to an eating disorder developing in a person. The disorder touches all different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, and all different ages. However, there is a tendency for people struggling with eating disorders to be younger, between the ages of 12 and 26. Those who are diagnosed later in life may have developed an eating disorder when they were younger, but did not seek treatment or did not have available treatment.

How common are eating disorders?

At least 30 million Americans of all ages and genders suffer from an eating disorders. Here are some additional statistics surrounding eating disorders:

- Eating disorders have one of the highest mortality rates of any mental illness.
- Eating disorders affects all races and ethnic groups.
- 20 to 30% of those with eating disorders are male.
- A majority of people diagnosed with an eating disorder are between the ages of 12 and 26.
- 13% of women over 50 engage in eating disorder behaviors.

Eating disorder treatment

Eating disorders are treated in a variety of ways depending on the severity. There are different levels of care, including residential care, inpatient care, and specialized outpatient treatment, such as intensive outpatient treatment (IOP) and partial hospitalization programs (PHP).

The types of therapy used in eating disorder treatment include:

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) with emphasis on exposure and response prevention (ERP)
- Dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT)
- Family-based treatment (FBT)
- Medication management

Rogers uses an evidence-based treatment model for all patients. This means we only use methods that have been proven to provide relief for a patient's symptoms.

Rogers Behavioral Health is a leader in treating eating disorders.
For more information, visit [rogersbh.org](https://www.rogersbh.org).