

What is an eating disorder?

Eating disorders are mental health conditions that involve unhealthy eating habits. These disorders can affect anyone, no matter their age, gender, or background.



There are three main types of eating disorders:

Anorexia Nervosa

People with anorexia are very afraid of gaining weight. They may think they are overweight even when they are not. To control their weight, they might eat very little, exercise a lot, and use other methods to lose weight.

Bulimia Nervosa

People with bulimia eat a lot of food in a short amount of time and then try to get rid of it by using laxatives, exercising a lot, or throwing up so they won't gain weight.

Binge Eating Disorder (BED)

People with BED also eat large amounts of food in a short time. But unlike bulimia, they don't try to get rid of the food afterward. This can cause unhealthy weight gain and health problems.

The causes of eating disorders include:

- 1. Genetics** – If someone in your family has an eating disorder, you might be at higher risk.
- 2. Social Pressure** – Society's expectations to look a certain way can make people more likely to develop eating disorders.
- 3. Psychological Factors** – Feeling bad about yourself, or being anxious or depressed, can increase the risk of an eating disorder.
- 4. Trauma** – Being bullied or experiencing emotional abuse can lead to eating disorders.

Signs of eating disorders include:

- 1.** Large changes in weight.
- 2.** Thinking about food all the time.
- 3.** Constantly dieting.
- 4.** Avoiding eating in front of others.
- 5.** Exercising too much.
- 6.** Mood swings.

Eating disorders can cause health problems such as:

- 1.** Malnutrition (not getting enough nutrients)
- 2.** Dehydration
- 3.** Digestive problems
- 4.** Weak bones
- 5.** Hormonal problems

Treatment for eating disorders includes:

- 1. Therapy** – Counseling can help change the way people think about food and their bodies.
- 2. Medical Help** – Doctors and nutritionists can help people get physically healthy again.
- 3. Support Groups** – Talking with others who understand can help people feel supported.

Resources

National Eating Disorders Associations (NEDA):

www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/