

require hospitalization to treat malnutrition problems. Treatment plans typically include one or more of the following:

- Individual, group, and/or family therapy
- Medical care and monitoring
- Nutritional counseling
- Medication(s)

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ **Seek immediate help** – Write down your symptoms and any relevant information. This enables your doctor to pair you with the right treatment and support.
- ✓ **Stay connected** – Resist the urge to isolate from your support network, family, and friends. Ask someone to accompany you to the doctor or therapist's office if you need help.
- ✓ **Fight temptation** – Frequently checking your body image or weight on the scale will not prove helpful. Explore alternative ways of coping to replace negative thoughts with more positive ones.

KEEP IN MIND

Overcoming an eating disorder is both possible and achievable. Stay consistent and stick with your treatment plan. Communication with your support team, mental health professional, and doctor is key to getting you on your way to the life you've always wanted.

What steps will you take today to move beyond an eating disorder?



Eating Disorders
Mental Health

Eating Disorders

Of all mental illnesses, eating disorders have the **HIGHEST MORTALITY RATE.** Never assume an eating disorder isn't a big deal.

Imagine a life free of food anxiety, where healthy eating habits fuel a successful, happy life.

Eating disorders occur when damaging eating behaviors become persistent.

In addition to your mental and physical health being impacted, daily functioning becomes more difficult too. Your body's heart, bones, teeth, and digestive system don't receive the nutrition they need.

EATING DISORDER CAUSES

Complex interactions between genes, behavior, psychology, and the environment all can contribute toward an eating disorder. You'll frequently see an eating disorder coexist with another, such as depression, substance use, or anxiety. Up to 30 million Americans wrestle with an eating disorder, affecting mostly women; however, men are affected as well. The most common forms are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder.

ANOREXIA NERVOSA

A serious and life-threatening disorder, anorexia occurs when someone thinks they're overweight though they clearly appear underweight. They obsess about their food intake and controlling their weight and shape. Other signs include:

- Extremely restricted eating
- Fear of gaining weight
- Lack of menstruation among girls and women

BULIMIA NERVOSA

Bulimia is characterized by frequently eating large amounts of food followed by purging or

other behaviors that compensate for overeating. Purging can occur through forced vomiting or the use of laxatives or diuretics. Excessive exercise or exercising immediately after bingeing is another means of compensating for eating behaviors. Additional indicators include:

- Lacking control over eating
- Restriction of eating that leads to bingeing and purging
- Preoccupation with weight and body shape
- Feelings of shame or secrecy regarding their behavior

BINGE-EATING DISORDER

Unlike other eating disorders, binge-eating occurs when a person loses control over their food intake. However, the bingeing is not followed by purging or fasting. Individuals with this disorder are often overweight and experience shame or guilt, further reinforcing the behavior. They typically eat more food than intended, even if not hungry.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

If you're concerned about yourself or a loved one, look for any of the following common signs.

- Skipping meals
- Extreme focus on healthy eating
- Persistent worry and talk about losing weight
- Leaving meals to use the restroom
- Expressing guilt or shame about eating habits
- Eating in secret

Proper nutrition, reducing excessive exercise, and eliminating purging behaviors are the foundations of any treatment plan. However, in the most severe cases, some patients may