



When Does Dieting Become Unhealthy?

The line between dieting and disordered eating is subtle, and can dissolve over time. The National Eating Disorders Association found that 35% of dieting becomes obsessive, and 20 to 25% of those diets turn into eating disorders.

With rates of disordered eating on the rise — approximately one in five boys and one in three girls are experiencing disordered eating across the world, according to an analysis of 32 studies recently published in JAMA — it is important to detect the signs early and to seek help right away. These signs include:

Obsessive Calorie Counting:

A constant fixation on calories, accompanied by anxiety when exceeding a self-imposed limit.

Avoidance of Food Groups:

Unnecessarily eliminating entire food groups without a medical rationale.

Laxative Misuse:

Resorting to laxatives as a means of purging consumed food.

Binge Eating:

Secretive, shame-filled episodes of consuming abnormally large quantities of food in a short timeframe.

Fasting:

Prolonged periods of food avoidance, often used as a misguided weight-loss strategy.

Compulsive Exercise:

An unhealthy relationship with exercise, involving excessive intensity or distress when missing a workout.

Self-Induced Vomiting:

Voluntarily vomiting, whether post-binge or after a regular meal.



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National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA)

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While disordered eating isn't considered an eating disorder by itself, people who engage in disordered eating are at high risk of developing an eating disorder over time. Even when disordered eating doesn't lead to a clinical eating disorder, it's associated with long-term mental and physical problems such as psychological distress and poorer overall health.

A combination of therapy, medication, nutrition-based therapy and lifestyle changes are often recommended to help people recover. Choosing a therapist, psychologist or counselor skilled in eating disorders is the first step in the right direction.

#PracticeNourishment #FeedingHope

If you or someone you know is struggling with food and body image concerns, it's important to seek professional help. You can find additional resources through the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) or call the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa & Associated Disorders (ANAD) Helpline at 888-375-7767.

