



Eating Disorders: Know the Signs

According to the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (ANAD), an estimated 30 million Americans struggle with eating disorders. These disorders have the second highest mortality rate of any mental illness, with an average of one death every hour as a result of the condition.

It is not always easy to spot an eating disorder, because it can often be indistinguishable from dieting. It is especially difficult for health care providers, since they lack the full picture of their patients' eating habits. Most people with eating disorders do not look markedly underweight. This is why it's important for parents, guardians and others to advocate for their children or loved ones if they think something is wrong. Recognizing the signs of an eating disorder is the first step toward getting help.

Excessive Dieting

- Fastening or skipping meals
- Counting calories
- Cutting out food groups (i.e. sugar, carbs, fat, dairy)
- Weighing out food

Preoccupation with exercise

- Rigid exercise routine that causes distress if disrupted
- Exercising as a 'punishment' for food or to 'earn' food
- Obsessive use of fitness watches or trackers (fixation on reaching 'step goals')

Sudden obsession with health

- Preoccupation with 'clean' eating
- Doing detoxes or cleanses
- Cutting out all 'unhealthy' foods and only eating 'healthy' foods

Increase or decrease in socializing

- Increasing socializing for constant distractions from food or to avoid mealtimes at home
- Skipping socializing to avoid food or to exercise

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Physical signs

Losing period (if female)

Weight fluctuations

Tired, fatigued, dizzy, moody

Always cold

Swollen cheeks, calluses on knuckles, damage to teeth, bad breath (indicators of self-induced vomiting or starvation)

Thinning hair

Frequent trips to the bathroom

Going to the toilet often and/or for long periods of time during or after meals

Long showers after meals

Laxative or diuretics use, or vomiting

#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.

