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# Eating Disorders and Mental Health

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24254BROMDCAEN  
201209



Eating disorders are a type of mental illness. They affect how you feel about your weight and the amount of food you eat. Do you think you have an eating disorder? Talk to your provider. He or she may suggest:

- Therapy
- Nutrition Counseling
- Group Support

It is best to use all three methods to treat an eating disorder.

## There are 3 types of eating disorders:

- **Anorexia.** This is when you starve yourself.
- **Bulimia.** This is when you throw up to avoid weight gain. You may take laxatives. Or, you may over exercise and stop eating.
- **Binge eating.** This is when you eat a large amount of food in a short amount of time.

## Myths vs. Facts

**1. Myth:** You must be underweight to have an eating disorder.

**Fact:** People with eating disorders come in all shapes and sizes.

**2. Myth:** Only teen girls and young women have eating disorders.

**Fact:** Eating disorders affect men and women of all ages.

**3. Myth:** People with eating disorders are vain.

**Fact:** People with eating disorders have many feelings. They may feel shame or anxiety.

**4. Myth:** Eating disorders are safe.

**Fact:** All eating disorders can cause major health problems.

## There are many signs of an eating disorder. You might:

- Follow a strict diet
- Diet even when thin
- Binge/Purge
- Have a poor body image
- Obsess with your body or weight
- Count calories
- Quickly lose weight or gain weight
- Take laxatives or diet pills
- Over exercise
- Make excuses to avoid eating
- Avoid events that serve food
- Go to the bathroom after meals
- Over eat alone or in secret
- Hide high calorie food

## Tips for parents of a child with an eating disorder

- Study your own eating habits.
- Avoid threats. Avoid scare tactics. Avoid angry outbursts.
- Try to promote self-esteem.
- Help find healthy ways to deal with bad feelings.
- Talk to your child's provider.