

EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders are serious but treatable mental and physical illnesses that can affect people of every age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic group. National surveys estimate that 20 million women and 10 million men in America will have an eating disorder at some point in their lives. (National Eating Disorder Association)

The three most common eating disorders are Anorexia, Bulimia, and Binge Eating. Basic definitions of each are found below:

Anorexia Nervosa- Anorexia nervosa is an eating disorder characterized by weight loss (or lack of appropriate weight gain in growing children); difficulties maintaining an appropriate body weight for height, age, and stature; and, in many individuals, distorted body image. People with anorexia generally restrict the number of calories and the types of food they eat. Some people with the disorder also exercise compulsively, purge via vomiting and laxatives, and/or binge eat. (National Eating Disorder Association)

Bulimia- Bulimia nervosa is a serious, potentially life-threatening eating disorder characterized by a cycle of bingeing and compensatory behaviors such as self-induced vomiting designed to undo or compensate for the effects of binge eating. (National Eating Disorder Association)

Binge Eating Disorder- Binge eating disorder (BED) is a severe, life-threatening, and treatable eating disorder characterized by recurrent episodes of eating large quantities of food (often very quickly and to the point of discomfort); a feeling of a loss of control during the binge; experiencing shame, distress or guilt afterwards; and not regularly using unhealthy compensatory measures (e.g., purging) to counter the binge eating. It is the most common eating disorder in the United States. (National Eating Disorder Association)

What do you do if you suspect a loved one is struggling with an Eating Disorder? This can be difficult because the loved one may be quite skilled at hiding the symptoms and may adamantly deny there is a problem. If you are concerned about your child, consult your pediatrician who can prescribe lab work to screen for malnutrition, and/or a dietician.

For More Information and Resources:

[National Eating Disorders Association](#)
[The Renfrew Center](#)

