



THE
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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

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Eating Disorders in Adolescents

Children with **eating disorders**, including anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder, experience extreme disturbances in eating behavior.

- Mayo Clinic states that “eating disorders are serious health conditions that affect both physical and mental health. These conditions include problems in how one thinks about food, eats, weighs, and in eating behaviors. These symptoms can affect health, emotions and ability to function in important areas of life.”

Statistics

- Often appears in teenagers and adolescents going into college
- 13% of adolescents will develop an eating disorder by the age of 20 (3.8% of females, 1.5% of males)

Warning Signs in Adolescents

- Skipping meals or snacks or making excuses for not eating
- Having very limited diet (not prescribed by a trained medical professional)
- Too much focus on food or healthy eating (especially if limits activities or participation (ex: not eating birthday cake or dining out))
- Making own meals rather than eating what family eats
- Constant and ongoing worry about being unhealthy or overweight
- Frequent checking in mirror and complaining about what is thought to be flaws

- Repeatedly eating large amounts of foods' using dietary supplements or laxatives for weight loss
- Exercising much more than the average person
- Leaving during meals or right after to use the toilet
- Talk of disgust, shame, depression, or guilt about eating habits
- Eating in secret

Types of Disorders

Anorexia Nervosa: a type of eating disorder in which adolescents can starve themselves. These adolescents view themselves as too fat when they often appear extremely thin to other people.

Bulimia Nervosa: another type of eating disorder that causes episodes of bingeing (out-of-control eating) and then purging (throwing up, using laxatives, not eating, or extreme exercise).

Binge Eating Disorder: kids eat large amounts of food very quickly and cannot control it (they usually overeat in secret and then feel ashamed and guilty).

Picky Eating: Kids who are very picky eaters and eat only a limited range of foods. They may become undernourished and could have a disorder called ALFRID.

Risk Factors for Children

- Family history of eating disorders
- Biology
- Dieting and starvation
- Other mental health issues
- A history of weight bullying
- Stress

Complications from Eating Disorders

- Serious health problems
- Depression and anxiety
- Suicidal thoughts or behavior
- Problems with growth and development
- Social and relationship problems
- Substance use disorders
- Work and school problems
- Death

Treatment

Psychological therapy (CBT, Compassion focused therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, emotion focused therapy, or cognitive remediation therapy)	Nutrition education and counseling to enforce healthy eating habits and proper nutrition
Medical and psychiatric monitoring	Medication to treat any underlying symptoms or conditions (if needed)

How Can I Help My Child?

- Avoid dieting around your child
- Talk to your child
- Encourage and reinforce a healthy body image
- Ask your child's health care provider for help

Resources:

- [Eating & Eating Disorders - Child Mind Institute](#)
- [Eating disorders - Symptoms and causes - Mayo Clinic](#)
- [Eating Disorders in Children and Adolescents | Johns Hopkins Medicine](#)
- [Parenting a Child with an Eating Disorder | Psychology Today](#)
- [Eating Disorders - National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\) \(nih.gov\)](#)
- [Types of Eating Disorders in Children & Adolescents | NYU Langone Health](#)
- [Psychiatry.org - What are Eating Disorders?](#)

Extra Helpful Resources (Books)

- *The Whole Brain Child* by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.
- *How to Talk so Little Kids Will Listen* by Joanna Faber and Julie King
- *How to Talk so Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Talk* by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish
- *No-Drama Discipline; the Whole-Brain Way to Calm the Chaos and Nurture your Child's Developing Mind* by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.
- *Breaking Free of Child Anxiety and OCD* by Eli R. Lebowitz, Ph.D.
- *Freeing your Child from Anxiety* by Tamar E. Chansky, Ph.D.