

40. **If you are using food to deal with problems, you can get help.**

41. If you think you might have an eating disorder, tell someone.

42. Talk to a friend, relative, counselor or doctor.

43. If you think a friend has an eating disorder, let him or her know you want to help.

44. The sooner a person gets help, the better the chance of recovery.

45. Recovery from eating disorders takes time, effort and support – but it is possible!



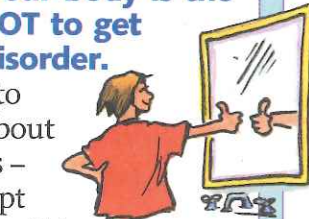
46. **Accepting your body is the best way NOT to get an eating disorder.**

47. Don't buy into stereotypes about attractiveness – they can tempt you to do something dangerous to control how you look.

48. Remember, who you are is more important than how you look.

49. Being thinner is not the same thing as being happier or healthier.

50. **Happy, healthy, attractive people come in different shapes and sizes.**



If you or someone you know has an eating disorder, the sooner you get help, the greater the chance of recovery. You can contact Overeaters Anonymous at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) or look in the white pages of your phone book. Or, contact the National Eating Disorders Association at 1-800-931-2237 or [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org) for information and referrals.

This pamphlet is not a substitute for professional medical care. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with a health care provider.

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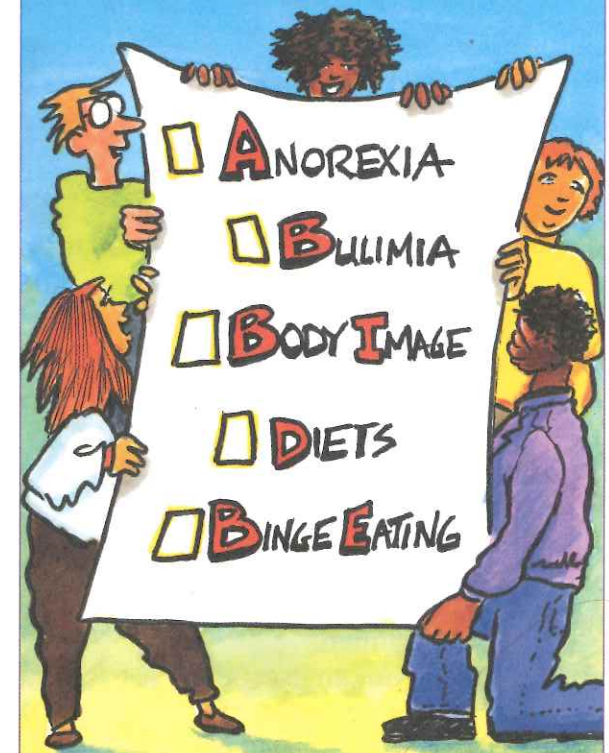
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PROBLEMS WITH FOOD

# 50 Things You Should Know About Eating Disorders



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

# 50 Things You Should Know About Eating Disorders

## 1. **Anyone can have an eating disorder.**

- Eating disorders include anorexia, bulimia and binge eating disorder.
- People of any age can have an eating disorder, but teen girls and boys may have a higher risk.



- A person's body size does not tell you if he or she has an eating disorder.
- A person with an eating disorder could be thin, average or heavy.
- People with eating disorders often worry about food, body size and getting fat.
- People with eating disorders may weigh themselves a lot, or be secretive about what, when and how they eat.
- Eating to calm down can be part of an eating disorder.
- Eating disorders are serious, potentially life-threatening conditions.
- People with eating disorders can – and do – die of starvation or heart attack.



## 11. **Binge eating means you can't stop.**

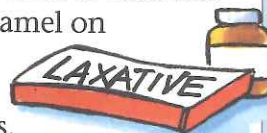
- Binge eating (also called compulsive overeating) is eating a lot of food quickly, even when you aren't hungry.
- Signs include hiding or stealing food, eating in secret, or eating until you feel stuffed.
- People who binge eat may feel ashamed or guilty after eating.
- Binge eating can lead to obesity. It can cause diabetes and heart problems.



**GUILT**

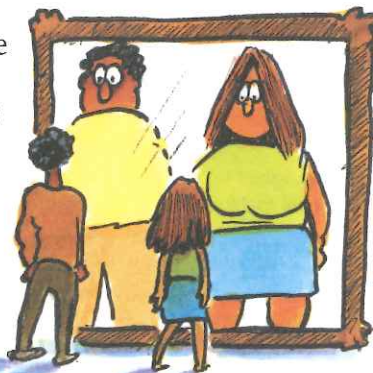
## 16. **A symptom of bulimia is making yourself throw up.**

- People with bulimia eat large amounts of food and then try to get rid of (purge) the food or calories from their bodies.
- People with bulimia may make themselves vomit, take laxatives, fast or over-exercise.
- Bulimia can wreck the enamel on your teeth, damage your esophagus and stomach, and create heart problems.



## 20. **Anorexia is starving yourself.**

- A person who is quite thin but still eats very little may be anorexic.
- People who are anorexic may be afraid of gaining weight.
- Dieting too much or having "rules" about eating are symptoms of anorexia.
- Exercising too much and feeling like you can't stop is a sign of anorexia.
- Anorexia causes weakness, low heart rate, stomach problems and hair loss.
- Girls who are anorexic may stop having menstrual periods. Boys may lose male hormones.
- People who are anorexic may see themselves as fat even when they are dangerously thin.



## 28. **Eating disorders are about more than food.**

- People with eating disorders may use food to deal with painful emotions.
- Depression, family problems and a history of physical or sexual abuse can all be factors in eating disorders.
- No one wants to have an eating disorder. It's not something people choose.



## 32. **Repeated dieting may lead to eating disorders.**

- Extreme weight-loss diets often don't work.
- Studies show that 95 percent of dieters who lose weight gain it back within five years – most in the first year.
- Your body responds to rigid dieting by slowing down – making it harder to lose weight.
- If you want to be a healthy weight, eating a variety of nutritious foods and getting regular exercise will work better than dieting.



## 37. **Athletes are more at risk for eating disorders.**

- Because some sports (like gymnastics and wrestling) expect athletes to be a specific weight or body type, athletes can feel pressure to measure up.
- Beware of anyone who says you should lose weight or gain muscle quickly. They may be focused on winning and not realize the danger to your health!