

## Does this sound like you?

- You are always dieting and think you are fat
- You eat very little, or eat a lot and then compensate for it by inducing vomiting, exercising, or using laxatives or diet pills
- You have intense and persistent fear of gaining weight
- You think you are fat even though others tell you that you're not
- You have hair loss, swollen salivary glands, or broken blood vessels in your eyes
- You feel like you don't have control over your eating behavior
- If you experience some of these concerns, you may have an eating disorder. Eating Disorders are real illnesses that need to be treated.

## What are eating disorders?

The two most common types of eating disorders are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. In anorexia nervosa, an individual refuses to maintain a normal weight and is afraid of gaining weight. In bulimia nervosa, an individual engages in binge eating episodes and behaviors to compensate for eating too much, such as self-induced vomiting, use of laxatives, fasting, or excessive exercise. Individuals with eating disorders often have misperceptions about the size or shape of their bodies. They often see themselves as fatter than others see them. Anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa can both lead to severe physical consequences for individuals such as amenorrhea (loss of menstruation), anemia, cardiovascular problems, dental problems, and even death.

## When do eating disorders start and how long do they last?

Anorexia nervosa typically begins between the ages of 13 and 18. Bulimia nervosa typically begins in late adolescence or early adulthood. Eating disorders can begin at any age, however. If untreated, eating disorders may last for many years.

## Do many people have this illness?

It is estimated that as many as 13% of college-aged females have eating disorders. Eating disorders also occur in males.

## How can I help myself?

Talk to a counselor or a doctor about your concerns and about how if your concerns keep you from doing everyday things and living your life.

## How can a doctor or counselor help me?

Talking to a counselor helps many people with eating disorders. Therapy can help individuals with eating disorders regain control over their lives.

Individuals with eating disorders should see a doctor for a physical examination. Medication is sometimes prescribed for eating disorders.