

Health Watch

What are eating disorders?

An eating disorder is an illness that causes serious disturbances to your everyday diet, such as eating extremely small amounts of food or severely overeating. A person with an eating disorder may have started out just eating smaller or larger amounts of food, but at some point, the urge to eat less or more spiraled out of control. Severe distress or concern about body weight or shape may also characterize an eating disorder.

Eating disorders frequently appear during the teen years or young adulthood but may also develop during childhood or later in life. Common eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder.

Eating disorders affect both men and women. For the latest statistics on eating disorders, visit www.nimh.nih.gov

It is unknown how many adults and children suffer with other serious, significant eating disorders, including one category of eating disorders called eating disorders not otherwise specified (EDNOS). EDNOS includes eating disorders that do not meet the criteria for anorexia or bulimia nervosa. Binge-eating disorder is a type of eating disorder called EDNOS. EDNOS is the most common diagnosis among people who seek treatment.

Eating disorders are real, treatable medical illnesses. They frequently coexist with other illnesses such as depression, substance abuse, or anxiety disorders. Other symptoms, described in the next section can become life-threatening if a person does not receive treatment. People with anorexia nervosa are 18 times more likely to die early compared with people of similar age in the general population.

Do you know the different types of depression?



"Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm."

--Steven Wright

[Depression Types](#)

All depression types are not the same. Learn about the different types of depression, the signs and symptoms, and talk to your doctor about treatment.

[Major Depression](#)

Read about the causes and symptoms of major depression and the available treatments. Talk openly with your doctor if you have these major depression symptoms because help is available.

[Chronic Depression \(Dysthymia\)](#)

Chronic depression or dysthymia is a milder form of depression that affects millions. Find out if you or a loved one has chronic depression.

[Atypical Depression](#)

Many people with depression don't have the typical symptoms. Learn about the causes and treatment of atypical depression, with symptoms that include weight gain, sleeping too much, and feeling anxious.

[Postpartum Depression](#)

Postpartum depression is increasingly common. Discover the signs and symptoms of postpartum depression and seek early medical treatment to keep it from affecting your life.

[Bipolar Depression \(Manic Depression\)](#)

Learn all about the mood swings of bipolar depression (manic depression) from the elated highs of mania to the major depression lows.

[Seasonal Depression \(SAD\)](#)

Do you get depressed during certain times of the year? Learn when seasonal affective disorder is most likely to affect people and what your doctor can do to help you manage the symptoms.

[Psychotic Depression](#)

Learn all about psychotic depression -- psychosis, hallucinations, and other signs -- and know when to call the doctor for a medical evaluation.

[What Is Serotonin Syndrome?](#)

Get information about serotonin syndrome including causes, symptoms, and treatments.



Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD or AD/HD or ADD) is a developmental disorder. It is primarily characterized by "the co-existence of attentional problems and hyperactivity, with each behavior occurring infrequently alone" and symptoms starting before seven years of age.

ADHD is the most commonly studied

and diagnosed psychiatric disorder in children, affecting about 3 to 5 percent of children globally and diagnosed in about 2 to 16 percent of school aged children. It is a chronic disorder with 30 to 50 percent of those individuals diagnosed in childhood continuing to have symptoms into adulthood. Adolescent s and adults with ADHD tend to develop

compensate for some or all of their impairments It is estimated that 4.7 percent of American adults live with ADHD.

ADHD is diagnosed two to four times more frequently in boys than in girls, ADHD management usually involves some combination of medications, behavior modifications, lifestyle changes, and counseling.



Generalized anxiety disorder

It's normal to feel anxious from time to time, especially if your life is stressful. However, if you have ongoing anxiety that interferes with day-to-day activities and relationships and makes it hard to enjoy life, you may have generalized anxiety disorder.

It's possible to develop generalized anxiety disorder as a child or as an adult. Generalized anxiety disorder has similar symptoms as panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and other types of anxiety, but they're all different conditions.

Living with generalized anxiety disorder can be a long-term challenge. In many cases, it occurs along with other anxiety or mood disorders. In most cases, generalized anxiety disorder improves with medications or psychotherapy. Making lifestyle changes, learning coping skills and using relaxation techniques also can help.