



Eating Disorders

When someone has an eating disorder, they have problems with how they eat, think, and feel about food. You can't tell if someone has an eating disorder just by looking at them.

Having an eating disorder is not a choice—it is a mental illness. If someone with an eating disorder doesn't get help, they can become very sick or even die.

If you think you or a loved one may have an eating disorder, you can take Cardinal Innovations Healthcare's mental health screening at: cardinalinnovations.org/resources/mental-health-screening

There are three main types of eating disorders:

Anorexia nervosa

Someone with anorexia nervosa restricts what they eat and may:

- Look extremely thin
- Have strict rules about eating
- Think they look overweight (even when they're not)
- Not eat enough food
- Exercise too much
- Weigh themselves constantly
- Have a fear of gaining weight
- Use laxatives or make themselves throw up to lose weight

Bulimia nervosa

A person with bulimia nervosa eats lots of food uncontrollably (bingeing). Then, to make up for the food they ate, they may:

- Not eat (this is called fasting)
- Use laxatives
- Make themselves vomit
- Exercise too much

Bulimia nervosa can lead to problems like:

- Constantly sore throat
- Dehydration
- Unhealthy intestines
- Swollen neck and jaw (salivary glands)
- Acid reflux
- Worn tooth enamel (from vomiting)

Binge-eating disorder

Someone with binge-eating disorder has no control over their eating. They are often overweight or obese. They may:

- Eat a lot of food in a small amount of time
- Eat when they're full
- Eat very quickly
- Be secretive about food
- Diet a lot, possibly without losing weight

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (nimh.nih.gov)