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## HEALTH TOPICS

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# Eating Disorders

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Sign up for email updates about eating disorders

## What are eating disorders?

Eating disorders are serious illnesses marked by severe disturbances in a person's eating behaviors. Although many people may be concerned about their health, weight, or appearance on occasion, some become fixated or obsessed with weight loss, body weight or shape, and controlling their food intake. These may be signs of an eating disorder.

### Mental Health Minute: Eating Disorders



# Where can I learn more about eating disorders?



## Free health information

Brochures and fact sheets with more information about eating disorders, including signs, symptoms, and treatment options. Available for free in print and online.



## Science updates

NIMH news about eating disorders, including press releases and highlights on the latest research findings.



## Statistics

Information about the prevalence and treatment of eating disorders in the United States.

## Why is NIMH studying eating disorders?

Eating disorders are serious and can be life-threatening. In addition, people with eating disorders are at higher risk for medical complications and co-occurring mental illnesses, including [depression, anxiety](#), and [substance use disorders](#). These co-occurring conditions can make eating disorders worse. Eating disorders can be treated successfully. Early detection and treatment are important for a full recovery.

## How is NIMH research addressing this critical topic?

NIMH is funding and conducting research to understand why certain people are more likely to develop eating disorders than others. This includes research that examines genetic, biological, behavioral, psychological, and social factors. We're also supporting research to better understand how an eating disorder behavior, such as restrictive eating, may impact a person's brain and gut.

We're supporting research to expand the reach and effectiveness of current therapies. This includes research that leverages technology to engage people in treatment and personalizes interventions to improve treatment response. We're also funding research into novel treatment options, including medications and behavioral therapies that can prevent or reverse unhealthy food-related behaviors.

## Explore clinical trials about eating disorders

Clinical trials are research studies that look at new ways to prevent, detect, or treat diseases and conditions. To learn more or find a study, visit:

- [Clinical Trials – Information for Participants](#): Answers to common questions about clinical trials, including why people might take part in a clinical trial and what they can expect
- [Clinicaltrials.gov: Current Studies on Eating Disorders ↗](#): List of clinical trials funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) being conducted across the country



## Digital shareables

Social media graphics, videos, and resources about eating disorders.

## Find help and support

Learn [how to find help](#) for yourself or someone else. You can also [find support](#) and [locate mental health services](#) in your area on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration website.

If you or someone you know is struggling or having thoughts of suicide, call or text the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) at 988 or chat at [988lifeline.org](#). In life-threatening situations, call 911.

## Additional federal resources

- [Eating Disorders](#) (MedlinePlus): Information, journal articles, and other resources about eating disorders collected by the National Library of Medicine

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## Disclaimer

We link to external websites for informational purposes only, but we do not endorse or guarantee their accuracy. Once you leave our site, you will be subject to the new website's privacy policy. Read NIMH's [full external linking policy](#) for more information.

### NIMH Resources

[Health Topics](#)  
[Brochures and Fact Sheets](#)  
[Contact Us](#)  
[Información en español](#)

### Policies and Notices

[Privacy Policy](#)  
[Website Policies](#)  
[FOIA](#)  
[Accessibility](#)  
[HHS Vulnerability Disclosure](#)

### Federal Resources

[National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#)  
[NIH Virtual Tour](#)  
[U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)  
[USA.gov](#)

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is part of NIH, a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.