

Fact Sheet: Eating Disorders

General:

- Almost 50% of people with eating disorders meet the criteria for depression.¹
- Only 1 in 10 men and women with eating disorders receive treatment. Only 35% of people that receive treatment for eating disorders get treatment at a specialized facility for eating disorders.²
- Up to 24 million people of all ages and genders suffer from an eating disorder (anorexia, bulimia and binge eating disorder) in the U.S.³
- Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness.⁴

Students:

- 91% of women surveyed on a college campus had attempted to control their weight through dieting. 22% dieted "often" or "always."⁵
- 86% report onset of eating disorder by age 20; 43% report onset between ages of 16 and 20.⁶
- Anorexia is the third most common chronic illness among adolescents.⁷
- 95% of those who have eating disorders are between the ages of 12 and 25.⁸
- 25% of college-aged women engage in bingeing and purging as a weight-management technique.³
- The mortality rate associated with anorexia nervosa is 12 times higher than the death rate associated with all causes of death for females 15-24 years old.⁴

Men:

- An estimated 10-15% of people with anorexia or bulimia are male.⁹
- Men are less likely to seek treatment for eating disorders because of the perception that they are "woman's diseases."¹⁰
- Among gay men, nearly 14% appeared to suffer from bulimia and over 20% appeared to be anorexic.¹¹

Media, Perception, Dieting:

- 95% of all dieters will regain their lost weight within 5 years.³
- 35% of "normal dieters" progress to pathological dieting. Of those, 20-25% progress to partial or full-syndrome eating disorders.⁵
- The body type portrayed in advertising as the ideal is possessed naturally by only 5% of American females.³
- 47% of girls in 5th-12th grade reported wanting to lose weight because of magazine pictures.¹²
- 69% of girls in 5th-12th grade reported that magazine pictures influenced their idea of a perfect body shape.¹³
- 42% of 1st-3rd grade girls want to be thinner (Collins, 1991).
- 81% of 10 year olds are afraid of being fat (Mellin et al., 1991).

Collins, M.E. (1991). Body figure perceptions and preferences among pre-adolescent children. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 199-208.

Mellin, L., McNutt, S., Hu, Y., Schreiber, G.B., Crawford, P., & Obarzanek, E. (1991). A longitudinal study of the dietary practices of black and white girls 9 and 10 years old at enrollment: The NHLBI growth and health study. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 23-37.

For Women

- Women are much more likely than men to develop an eating disorder. Only an estimated 5 to 15 percent of people with anorexia or bulimia are male.¹⁴
- An estimated 0.5 to 3.7 percent of women suffer from anorexia nervosa in their lifetime.¹⁴ Research suggests that about 1 percent of female adolescents have anorexia.¹⁵
- An estimated 1.1 to 4.2 percent of women have bulimia nervosa in their lifetime.¹⁴
- An estimated 2 to 5 percent of Americans experience binge-eating disorder in a 6-month period.¹⁴
- About 50 percent of people who have had anorexia develop bulimia or bulimic patterns.¹⁵

References:

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