

Eating Disorders - Basic Facts

Worried about the reflection that stares back at you whenever you face the mirror? Are you constantly fidgeting whenever you think of the weighing scale? Do you wish your body or a part of your body looked differently? Do you skip meals or constantly count calories whenever you eat? Do you exercise to the point of over-exhaustion? Do you constantly suffer from exercise-related injuries? If you do, you may be at risk of having eating disorders. In a society that gives too much importance to physical appearances, it is not impossible to feel unhappy or pressured with the way one looks. Wouldn't you feel strained when everywhere you look, the idea of thinness beyond healthy limits is being promoted as the "ideal figure"? Magazine covers are splashed with photos of waif-like models, famous actors and actresses, all sporting ultra-svelte bodies and diet firms constantly promoting new fads that are designed to be the "diet of all diets". Eating disorders often are long-term illnesses that may require long-term treatments. Although the exact causes of eating disorders are yet to be established, these maladies are oftentimes observed to be the result of a complex interplay of various factors. Behavioral, emotional, psychological, personal and interpersonal factors all have important roles to play in this problem. Eating disorders are characterized by critical disturbances in eating behaviors. A person afflicted with this problem may voluntarily resort to an unhealthy reduction in food intake or may abnormally take in more food than necessary. Feelings of guilt and extreme concern over weight or body shape likewise accompany this malady. According to studies conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health, adolescent girls and young women account for nearly 90% of all reported cases of eating disorders. However, although there is a predominance of females being afflicted with this problem, males are not exempt from eating disorders. Recent statistics show that males account for about 5% to 15% of anorexia cases and about 35% of binge-eating disorders. Eating disorders are usually manifested during the teen years until the early adult periods. However, recent studies indicate that the problem can occur as early as the childhood phase or later in adulthood. There are three major types of eating disorders - anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder. People suffering from anorexia nervosa (or anorexia) perceive themselves as overweight or fat even when they are already outrageously thin. They have such distorted sense of self-image that they often refuse to eat for fear of gaining extra pounds. Anorexics exercise compulsively and develop peculiar eating habits such as avoiding food and meal times, picking out a few foods and nibbling on them. They may even go as far as weighing their food and are tirelessly counting calories! Bulimia nervosa sufferers may eat excessive amounts of food until they are uncomfortably full then try to expel them by making themselves vomit or by using diuretics or laxatives. Bulimics may likewise exercise compulsively just to shed those calories from the food they have consumed. Binge-eaters frequently consume large quantities of food, but unlike bulimics, they do not try to purge themselves after their binge episodes. Those afflicted with this condition often eat alone during binges and feel guilty afterwards for their actions. Eating disorders bring devastating effects to the body. Leaving them untreated can lead to serious medical complications and even death. So, if you are showing symptoms indicating the possibility of eating disorders, talk about it with a person you can trust. Get appropriate medical attention. The earlier the malady is treated, the better the chances of recovery.

About the Author

Winter is prime time for comfort food, an online survey says. The ultimate comfort foods are homey favorites like meatloaf and macaroni.

Source: <http://productsherbal.com>