

Eating Disorders: Help for Students

When

Eating

Issues

Get

Hard

2

Handle

And

Really

Draining

**Bates College
Health Center**



What Causes Eating Disorders?

Eating disorders are complex conditions that arise from a combination of long-standing behavioral, biological, emotional, psychological, interpersonal, and social factors. Scientists and researchers are still learning about the underlying causes of these emotionally and physically damaging conditions. We do know, however, about some of the general issues that can contribute to the development of eating disorders.

While eating disorders may begin with preoccupations with food and weight, they are most often about much more than food. People with eating disorders often use food and the control of food in an attempt to compensate for feelings and emotions that may otherwise seem over-whelming. For some, dieting, bingeing, and purging may begin as a way to cope with painful emotions and to feel in control of one's life, but ultimately, these behaviors will damage a person's physical and emotional health, self esteem, and sense of competence and control.

Psychological Factors that can Contribute to Eating Disorders:

- Low self esteem
- Feelings of inadequacy or lack of control in life
- Depression, anxiety, anger, or loneliness

Interpersonal Factors that can Contribute to Eating Disorders:

- Troubled family and personal relationships
- Difficulty expressing emotions and feelings
- History of being teased or ridiculed based on size or weight
- History of physical sexual abuse

Social Factors that can Contribute to Eating Disorders:

- Cultural pressures that glorify and place value on "thinness"
- Narrow definitions of beauty that include only specific body sizes
- Cultural norms that value people based on physical appearance

Biological Factors that can Contribute to Eating Disorders:

- Research on biochemical or biological causes of eating disorders is ongoing.
- Eating disorders often run in families. Research indicates there are significant genetic contributions to eating disorders.

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Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26)©

Instructions: This is a screening measure to help you determine whether you might have an eating disorder that needs professional attention. This screening measure is not designed to make a diagnosis of an eating disorder or take the place of a professional consultation. Please fill out the below form as accurately, honestly and completely as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. All of your responses are confidential.

Part A: Complete the following questions:

1) Birth Date Month: Day: Year: 2) Gender: Female Male

3) Height Feet : Inches:

4) Current Weight (lbs.): 5) Highest Weight (excluding pregnancy):

6) Lowest Adult Weight: 7) Ideal Weight:

Part B: Please check a response for each of the following statements:

	Always	Usually	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. Am terrified about being overweight	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
2. Avoid eating when I am hungry	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
3. Find myself preoccupied with food	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
4. Have gone on eating binges where I feel I may not be able to stop	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
5. Cut my food into small pieces	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
6. Aware of the calorie content of foods I eat	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
7. Particularly avoid food with a high carbohydrate content (bread, rice, potatoes, etc.)	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
8. Feel that others would prefer if I ate more	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
9. Vomit after I have eaten	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
10. Feel extremely guilty after eating	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
11. Am preoccupied with a desire to be thinner	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
12. Think about burning up calories when I exercise	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
13. Other people think I'm too thin	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
14. Am preoccupied with the thought of having fat on my body	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
15. Take longer than others to eat my meals	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
16. Avoid foods with sugar in them	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
17. Eat diet foods	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
18. Feel that food controls my life	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
19. Display self-control around food	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
20. Feel that others pressure me to eat	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
21. Give too much time and thought to food	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
22. Feel uncomfortable after eating sweets	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
23. Engage in dieting behavior	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
24. Like my stomach to be empty	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
25. Have the impulse to vomit after meals	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	
26. Enjoy trying new rich foods	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	

Scoring the Eating Attitudes Test

After scoring each item, add the scores for a total. If your score is over 20, we recommend that you discuss your responses with a counselor at the Health Center. Please come to the Health Center to arrange a counseling appointment by signing in at the front desk and speaking confidentially to a nurse. There is no charge for counseling appointments.

This questionnaire is made available with permission from the authors.

Garner, D.M., Olmsted, M.P., Bohr, Y., and Garfinkle, P.E. (1982). The Eating Attitudes Test: Psychometric features and clinical correlates. *Psychological Medicine*, 12, 871-878.

Treatment of Eating Disorders

- Eating Disorders are serious health conditions that can be both physically and emotionally destructive.
- People with eating disorders need to seek professional help.
- Early diagnosis and intervention may enhance recovery.
- Eating disorders can become chronic, debilitating, and even life-threatening conditions.

The most effective and long-lasting treatment for an eating disorder is some form of psychotherapy or counseling, coupled with careful attention to medical and nutritional needs. Treatment is tailored to each person based on individual needs. At times, more intensive treatment than outpatient care, may be necessary. ¹

At Bates.....

The Health Center provides a multidisciplinary approach by providing counseling, medical care, and nutritional consultation. To speak with someone confidentially at the Health Center, simply sign in as you enter the front desk. After signing in, you may have a seat in the waiting room until your name is called. It is not necessary to disclose the reason for your visit at the reception desk.

Counseling at the Health Center is confidential and free of charge.

The Health Center has an eating disorder specialist to provide counseling to men and women experiencing related issues.

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What Should I Say?

Talking to a Friend Who May Be Struggling with an Eating Disorder

If you are worried about your friend's eating behaviors or attitudes, it is important to express your concerns in a loving and supportive way. It is also necessary to discuss your worries early on, rather than waiting until your friend has endured many of the damaging physical and emotional effects of eating disorders. In a private and relaxed setting, talk to your friend in a calm and caring way about the specific things you have seen or felt that have caused you worry.

What to Say – Step by Step

Set a time to talk. Set aside a time for a private, respectful meeting with your friend to discuss your concerns openly and honestly in a caring, supportive way. Make sure you will be some place away from other distractions.

Communicate your concerns. Share your memories of specific times when you felt concerned about your friend's eating or exercise behaviors. Explain that you think these things may indicate that there could be a problem that needs professional attention.

Ask your friend to explore these concerns with a counselor at the Health Center. If you feel comfortable doing so, offer to help your friend make an appointment or accompany your friend on their first visit to the Health Center.

Avoid conflicts or battle of the wills with your friend. If your friend refuses to acknowledge that there is a problem, or any reason for you to be concerned, restate your feelings and the reasons for them and leave yourself available as a supportive listener.

Avoid placing shame, blame or guilt on your friend regarding their actions or attitudes. Do not use accusatory "you" statements like, "You just need to eat." Instead use I statements. For example: "I'm concerned about you because you refuse to eat breakfast or lunch." Or, "It makes me afraid to hear you vomiting."

Avoid giving simple solutions. For example, "If you'd just stop, then everything would be fine!"

Express your continued support. Remind your friend that you care and want your friend to be healthy and happy.

If your friend is refusing help, and you are worried about her/his safety, talk with someone at the Bates Health Center. You may speak with an RN 24 hours a day or call the 207-786-6199 to make an appointment with Chris Tisdale.

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Eating Disorder Resources

Recommended Reading:

Life Without Ed by Jennie Schaefer

Eating by the Light of the Moon: How Women Can Transform Their Relationships with Food Through Myths, Metaphors & Storytelling by Anita Johnson

Body Wars: The Body Myth by Margo Maine

The Golden Cage by Hilde Bruch

Bulimia: A Guide to Recovery by Lindsey Hall and Leigh Cohn

Rules of "Normal" Eating by Karen Koenig

Appetites by Carolyn Knapp

The Anorexia Workbook by Michelle Heffner, George Eifert

EDs: Journey to Recovery Workbook by Laura Goodman and Mona Villapiano

Eating Mindfully by Susan Albers

Recommended Websites

National and International ED association websites providing information on EDs.

- www.nationaleatingdisorders.org
- www.aedweb.org
- www.anad.org
- www.anred.com
- www.annawestinfoundation.org

Treatment and referral website of therapists, treatment centers & nutritionists.

- www.edreferral.com

Websites with general information, stats, resources, blogs, and some referrals.

- www.something-fishy.org
- www.healthyplace.com
- www.mirror-mirror.com
- www.medainc.org

(continued)

- www.mainelygirls.org Maine organization that provides outreach, education, and is involved in policy/advocacy. They have set up treatment teams in towns/cities all over Maine so you can call the main number to find one near you.
- www.bodyimagehealth.org
- www.eatingdisorderhope.com
- <http://namedinc.org> (National Association for Males with ED)

Websites with Books, Videos and other resources on ED

- www.gurze.com website where you can purchase books on Ed
- www.miaed.org (Media Education Foundation)
- www.findingbalance.com Has on demand videos on ED issues.

Websites geared specifically toward family/friends:

- www.BulimiaGuide.org
- <http://feast-ed.org/feast.html>

DVDs

Thin - HBO documentary film which takes the viewer inside the Renfrew Center closely following four young women.

www.thindocumentary.com

Beauty Mark: Body Image and the Race to Perfection

www.beautymarkmovie.com