

# Eating Disorders: Know the Signs

According to the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (ANAD), an estimated 30 million Americans struggle with eating disorders. Eating disorders have the second highest mortality rate of any mental illness, with an average of one death every hour as a direct result of the condition.

Despite their prevalence, eating disorders can be hard to detect. Individuals who suffer from an eating disorder may display a combination of symptoms, or just one. In some cases, they may not show any symptoms at all. They could also make significant efforts to hide their behavior due to embarrassment or shame.

Some of the warning signs of an eating disorder include:

## Dieting

- Fasting or skipping meals
- Cutting out food groups (i.e. sugar, carbs, fat, dairy)
- Counting calories
- Weighing out food

## Preoccupation with exercise

- Rigid exercise routine that causes distress if disrupted
- Obsessive use of fitness watches or trackers (obsession with reaching 'step goals')
- Exercising as a 'punishment' for food or to 'earn' food

## Sudden obsession with health

- Adopting 'clean' eating
- Cutting out all 'unhealthy' foods and only eating 'healthy' foods
- Doing detoxes or cleanses

## Increase or decrease in socializing

- Skipping socializing to avoid food or to do exercise
- Increasing socializing for constant distractions from food or to avoid mealtimes at home

## Physical signs

- Losing period (if female)
- Weight fluctuations
- Tired, fatigued, dizzy, moody
- Swollen cheeks, calluses on knuckles, damage to teeth, bad breath (indicators of self-induced vomiting or starvation)
- Always cold
- Thinning hair

## Frequent trips to the bathroom

- Going to the toilet often and/or for long periods of time during or after meals
- Long showers after meals
- Trips to the bathroom could be an indication of laxative or diuretics use, or vomiting

## #PracticeNourishment #FeedingHope

If you or someone you know is struggling with an eating disorder, you can find additional resources through the **National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA)** or call the **National Association of Anorexia Nervosa & Associated Disorders (ANAD)** Helpline at 888-375-7767.