

## DID YOU KNOW...

- Eating disorders are not choices, but serious biologically-influenced illnesses with a genetic component.
- It is estimated that between 28-74% of the risk for developing an eating disorder is through genetic heritability.
- Social and environmental factors such as bullying, social media, trauma, or onset of other mental illnesses can impact eating disorder development.
- Eating disorders affect people of all genders, ages, races, ethnicities, body shapes and weights, physical and neurological abilities, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses.
- 28.8 million Americans will experience an eating disorder in their lifetime.
- Less than 6% of people with eating disorders are medically diagnosed as “underweight.”
- Families can be the patients’ and providers’ best allies in treatment.
- Anorexia Nervosa has one of the highest overall mortality rates and the highest suicide rate of any psychiatric disorder.
- Full recovery from an eating disorder is possible. Early detection, intervention, and access to treatment are important.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

National Alliance for Eating Disorders  
Phone: (866) 662-1235  
[www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com](http://www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com)  
[www.findEDhelp.com](http://www.findEDhelp.com)

## ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

The National Alliance for Eating Disorders (formerly The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness) is the leading national non-profit organization providing education, referrals, and support for all individuals (and their loved ones) experiencing eating disorders. Founded in October 2000, The Alliance has worked tirelessly to support eating disorder awareness and education, promote and provide access to care, offer comprehensive services such as support groups and outpatient care, and eliminate the shame and stigma associated with eating disorders.

The Alliance’s services include:

- Referrals through a therapist-staffed helpline and comprehensive referral website/app, [findEDhelp.com](http://findEDhelp.com).
- Free, weekly, therapist-led support groups offered nationwide both virtually and in-person.
- Educational presentations to schools, communities, and agencies.
- Continuing education to healthcare providers and hospitals.
- Low-cost, life-saving, outpatient treatment to adults living in South Florida who are uninsured or underinsured.
- Unique and empowering scale smashing events and SmashTALK panel discussions aimed at college and university students.
- Advocacy for eating disorders and mental health legislation.

The Alliance understands that eating disorders are often impacted by a number of social, economic, and environmental factors. Using a Health at Every Size® framework, The Alliance aims to create an inclusive, culturally competent, and supportive space that acknowledges the multitude of factors that contribute to eating disorders.

**NATIONAL ALLIANCE**  
for Eating Disorders

# WHAT IS ANOREXIA NERVOSA?

Anorexia Nervosa is an eating disorder characterized by the restriction of energy requirements, body image disturbances, and an intense fear of food or gaining weight.

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# WHAT IS ANOREXIA NERVOSA?

Anorexia Nervosa is an eating disorder characterized by the restriction of energy requirements, body image disturbances, and an intense fear of food or gaining weight. The two subtypes of Anorexia Nervosa are the restricting subtype (limited food intake) and the binge-eating/purging subtype (restricted food intake followed by binge-eating and/or purging behaviors). Binge behaviors are self-perceived and characterized by feeling out of control. Purging behaviors may include self-induced vomiting, compulsive exercise, and abuse of laxatives, diuretics, or enemas. It is important to note that there are negative health consequences of equal severity across all eating disorder categories.

## DSM-5 DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA

- Restriction of energy intake relative to requirements leading to a significantly low body weight in the context of age, sex, developmental trajectory, and physical health.
- Intense fear of gaining weight or becoming fat, even though underweight.
- Disturbance in the way in which one's body weight, or shape is experienced, undue influence of body weight or shape on self-evaluation, or denial of the seriousness of the current low body weight.

## WARNING SIGNS (MAY INCLUDE)

- Weight loss and distorted body image
- Fear of weight gain
- Preoccupation with weight, calories, and food
- Feelings of guilt after eating
- High levels of anxiety and/or depression
- Low self-esteem and/or self-injury
- Social isolation
- Excuses for not eating/denial of hunger
- Food rituals
- Intense, dramatic mood swings
- Cold intolerance, fatigue, dizziness, or fainting
- Excessive and compulsive exercise
- Control issues
- Sleep difficulties

## HEALTH COMPLICATIONS (MAY INCLUDE)

- Low blood pressure and poor circulation
- Anemia (iron deficiency)
- Muscle loss and weakness
- Irregular menstruation, Amenorrhea, infertility
- Weak or brittle bones/osteoporosis
- Dehydration/kidney failure
- Edema (swelling)
- Memory loss/disorientation
- Growth of fine, downy hair on body (lanugo)
- Hormone disturbances which may lead to delayed physical maturation
- Electrolyte imbalance
- Seizures

## TREATMENT

Eating disorder treatment is essential and cannot be a luxury. However, only 1/3 of all individuals experiencing an eating disorder will receive treatment. The Alliance is dedicated to advocating and providing access to care for all individuals experiencing all types of eating disorders.

### MEMBERS OF THE TEAM

- Individual Therapist
- Family Therapist
- Registered Dietitian/Nutrition Therapist
- Psychiatrist
- Physician
- Support Group
- Others

### LEVELS OF CARE

- Outpatient (OP)
- Intensive Outpatient (IOP)
- Partial Hospitalization (PHP)
- Residential (RTC)
- Inpatient (IP)
- Acute Medical Stabilization

### TREATMENT OPTIONS

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)
- Family-Based Treatment (FBT)
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Radically Open DBT (RO-DBT)
- Internal Family Systems (IFS)
- Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP)
- Emotion Focused Family Therapy (EFFT)
- Other therapies

### GETTING HELP

If you think you or someone you know may be experiencing an eating disorder, please seek specialized, professional help as soon as possible. For more information on how to receive help, please visit [findEDhelp.com](http://findEDhelp.com), [allianceforeatingdisorders.com](http://allianceforeatingdisorders.com), or call us at 866-662-1235.