

disordered eating

Facts for youth



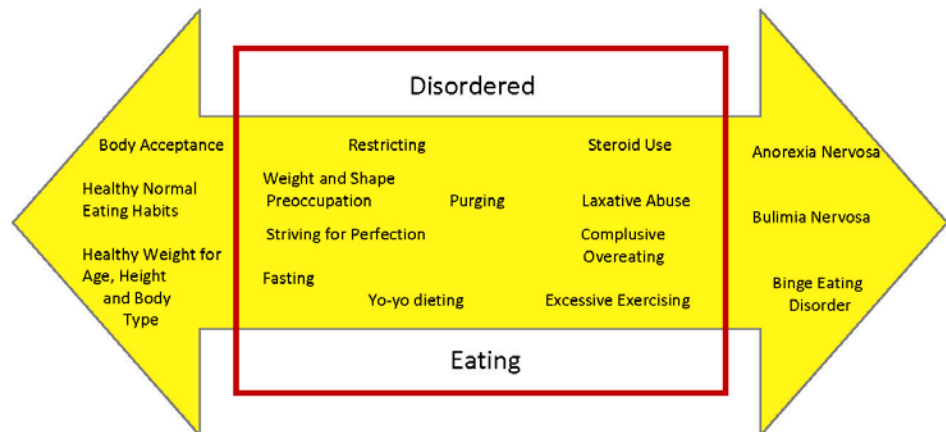
Who does it affect?

About one-tenth of the population are thought to be living with an eating disorder (greater numbers are found with dancers, models, actors and athletes) and one-tenth of that number are male. However, almost all women and girls over the age of eleven, have at one time indulged in disordered eating, most likely dieting. Research tells us that 81% of 10 year olds are afraid of being fat and 98% of females are unhappy with their bodies.

The message our society sends is that “fat” is not okay and “thin” is cool. Happiness, it would seem, equals being thin, perfect and in control. The media helps to create and perpetuate this notion that can lead to many children and teens developing an unhealthy body image and creating ways to maintain it.

What is Disordered Eating?

Disordered eating consists of a range of thoughts and feelings about food and body image that lie between healthy/normal eating habits with body acceptance at one end and eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia, or binge eating disorder) at the other. These behaviours are not just about eating. They include weight/shape preoccupation, a striving for perfection, yo-yo dieting, excessive exercising, fasting or restricting, compulsive overeating, purging, steroid use, and laxative abuse.



Disordered eating symptoms may occur once in a while or at certain key moments in a child or teen’s life - as a result of a stressful event, illness or preparing for an athletic event. However, when disordered eating continues for long periods of time and starts to get in the way of a child or teen’s everyday life and activities, or used to cope with strong feelings, it may lead to an eating disorder. Those “dabbling” in disordered eating are more at risk for eating disorders.