

Myths and Realities

Myths

Only teenage girls suffer from eating disorders.

You can never fully recover from an eating disorder.

Men with eating disorders are always gay. Someone's sexual preference has nothing to do with them developing an eating disorder.

Eating disorders are solely a problem with food. With all eating disorders, weight is the focus of life. By focusing on food, weight and calories, a person is able to block out or numb painful feelings and emotions. Some use food as a way to comfort themselves. Eating disorders are NOT a problem with food. They are in fact only a symptom of underlying problems.

Bulimics always purge by vomiting. Not all bulimics try to rid themselves of the calories they have consumed by vomiting. Purging can take the form of laxatives, diuretics, exercising, or fasting.

You can always tell someone is anorexic by their appearance. Not all anorexics look like the extreme cases shown on talk shows, etc. Some anorexics may be anywhere from 5 to 15 lbs. underweight. They look thin, but they do not have what society considers to be the "anorexic" look. Just because someone does not look emaciated, does not mean they are not anorexic or that their health is not in danger.

Anorexics do not eat candy, chocolate, etc. Many anorexics do avoid such foods, but some do eat them on a regular basis. If an anorexic decides to only allow him/herself 300 calories a day, they may very well choose to eat a chocolate bar, candy, etc.

Anorexics do not binge or purge Many anorexics will go on occasional binges

Realities

Many eating disorders do begin in the teenage years, but children, men, older women and just about anyone can fall victim to this terrible disorder.

Recovery takes a long time, but with hard work and the proper treatment, you can fully recover from your eating disorder.

and purge. Some anorexics can become so fearful of any food or drink that they will purge whatever they put into their system, including water.

You cannot die from bulimia.

Bulimics are at a high risk for dying, especially if they are purging, using laxatives and doing excessive exercise. Many bulimics have died from cardiac arrest which is usually caused by low potassium or an electrolyte imbalance. Others have died from a ruptured esophagus.

People with eating disorders do this to hurt their family and friends.

People with eating disorders are doing this to themselves. They are usually very upset when they know the people around them are worried or hurt by their eating disorder.

Compulsive eating is not an eating disorder.

It is very much an eating disorder and is just as serious as anorexia and bulimia.

Compulsive eaters are just lazy people.

Compulsive eating is a way to cope just like anorexia and bulimia are. A person uses food as a way to comfort or numb themselves, block out feelings and emotions, etc. They are not lazy! They are people in emotional pain trying to cope using the only way they know how. Like anorexia and bulimia, they need proper treatment to overcome it. They do not need to be sent to health spas and diet clinics.

People cannot have more than one eating disorder.

Many people have more than one eating disorder. It is very common for someone to suffer with more than one eating disorder. That just proves that the eating behaviors are only the symptoms, not the problem.

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