

# Eating Disorder

## Diagnosis

A person with an eating disorder will have the best recovery outcome if he or she receives an early diagnosis. If an eating disorder is believed to be an issue, a doctor will usually perform a physical examination, conduct an interview and order lab tests. These will help form the diagnosis and check for related medical issues and complications.

In addition, a mental health professional will conduct a psychological evaluation. They may ask questions about eating habits, behaviors and beliefs. There may be questions about a patient's history of dieting, exercise, bingeing and purging.

Symptoms must meet the criteria in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) in order to warrant a diagnosis. Each eating disorder has its own diagnostic criteria that a mental health professional will use to determine which disorder is involved. It is not necessary to have all the criteria for a disorder to benefit from working with a mental health professional on food and eating issues.

Often a person with an eating disorder will have symptoms of another mental health condition that requires treatment. Whenever possible, it is best to identify and address all conditions at the same time. This gives a person comprehensive treatment support that helps ensure a lasting recovery.

## Treatment

Eating disorders are managed by using a variety of techniques. Treatments will vary depending on the type of disorder, but will generally include the following:

- **Psychotherapy**, such as talk therapy or behavioral therapy.
- **Medicine**, such as antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs. Many people living with an eating disorder often have a co-occurring illness like depression or anxiety, and while there is no medication available to treat eating disorders themselves, many patients find that these medications help with underlying issues.
- **Nutritional counseling and weight restoration monitoring** are also crucial. Family-based treatment is especially important for families with children and adolescents because it enlists the family's help to better ensure healthy eating patterns and increases awareness and support.

Source: <http://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Eating-Disorders#sthash.Zy00ZBJq.dpuf>

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