Eating Disorders Count:
We Need Eating Disorders Included in Our Nation’s Health Monitoring Systems

Eating disorders are common and affect all communities

>30 million Americans experience an eating disorder in their lifetime

Only 1 in 3 receive care

Life time prevalence of eating disorders in the US

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<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Anorexia</th>
<th>Bulimia</th>
<th>Binge Eating</th>
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One of CDC’s most important responsibilities is to monitor the health of all Americans to:

- Detect outbreaks of infections like Zika
- Track rising rates of illness, like opioid addiction
- Find key connections, like between smoking and lung cancer
- Assess if public health programs are succeeding, like for maternal health
- Identify communities in need to target resources and services appropriately

**NO** national CDC surveys currently ask about eating disorders or their symptoms

- National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey
- National Health Interview Survey
- National Survey of Family Growth
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
- Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System*

*The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System previously included some questions, but these were dropped from the survey in 2015.

**NO** national CDC surveys have ever asked about binge eating disorder, despite it being the most common eating disorder.

Monitoring eating disorders is critical to answer urgent questions

- Learn early signs and symptoms before someone develops an eating disorder
- Identify regions or communities that are harder hit by eating disorders and need more public health programs and healthcare services
- Discover if we are missing affected groups, like veterans or kids with disabilities, who need specialized prevention efforts and treatment access
Eating disorders are harmful to health and the most fatal psychiatric disorder, but we need more data to know how to help

WE RECOMMEND MONITORING:

- Extreme dieting or fasting
- Binge eating
- Loss of control eating
- Abuse of diet pills
- Abuse of laxatives
- Abuse of muscle-building drugs
- Self-induced vomiting
- Dangerous use of diuretics

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Advocate adding eating disorder questions to the CDC’s health monitoring systems.

Some of the nation’s leading researchers on eating disorders have identified what types of behaviors need to be monitored to improve the nation’s health.

References


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