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

Lifetime prevalence of eating disorders in the US

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

EATING DISORDERS ARE NOT MONITORED

- In 2015, CDC removed eating disorders questions from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System.
- Currently, none of the 12+ national CDC surveys – with 100s of questions each – ask about eating disorders or symptoms.
- NO national CDC surveys have ever asked about the most prevalent eating disorder – binge eating disorder – or the highly affected American Indian community.

We recommend eating disorder questions be included in the following surveys:

- Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System
- National Health & Nutrition Examination Survey
- National Health Interview Survey

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

**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 which types of behaviors and communities need to be better monitored to improve the nation’s health.

**WE RECOMMEND MONITORING:**

- Extreme dieting or fasting
- Loss of control eating
- Abuse of diet pills
- Abuse of laxatives
- Abuse of muscle-building drugs
- Self-induced vomiting
- Dangerous use of diuretics
- Binge eating
- American Indian communities
- Boys’ and men’s health
- Veterans & military service members

*Indicates a neglected topic needing special focus*

**References**


**Contact:** Sarah Corcoran, Guide Consulting, scorcoran@guidelobby.com