

Key Information About Eating Disorders (EDs) For Teenagers

Facts

- The world makes billions of dollars off of making you feel bad about yourself (so you'll buy their product or their diet). If someone tells you that you aren't enough, question their motives.
- The constant pressure to look a certain way can be overwhelming/exhausting.
- Dieting behaviors may "work" initially but mostly end up causing weight gain and can lead to EDs.
- The majority of people with EDs aren't underweight.
- EDs can affect people of all ages, genders, body sizes, races, religions, and ethnicities.
- Exercise doesn't cause weight loss. It's for strength and fun.
- EDs are serious mental illnesses that can cause serious physical problems.
- Strength and physical fitness improve lifetime health outcomes more than weight loss and are more sustainable.

What's best for your body

- Eat satisfying, balanced meals throughout the day.
- Move your body for joy, to get stronger, and to accomplish things, not to punish it or make up for what you eat.
- Everyone needs enough rest, sleep, hydration, and nutrition, no matter their body size.

Choices you can make so the world is a nicer place for everyone

- Don't make comments about your body or other people's bodies, especially about body size.
- Don't talk about food as bad or good. It's just food, and everyone needs it.

- Curate your social media feed so it doesn't make you feel bad about yourself (and to give less power to influencers who make others feel inferior!).

If you think someone you care about has an ED

- When you are in a safe space with them, tell them you are worried and encourage them to seek support from a dietitian or therapist who knows about EDs. They might deny there's anything wrong or even get upset, but your words will make a difference.
- Don't try to fix them; this is something that requires professional support.
- Tell a trusted adult.

Resources

Sick Enough: A Guide to the Medical Complications of Eating Disorders (Gaudiani)

The Intuitive Eating Workbook for Teens: A Non-Diet, Body Positive Approach to Building a Healthy Relationship with Food (Resch)

This publication was made possible by NH75OT000105 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Department or CDC.

