

Eating disorders in Australia



FACT #1

Eating disorders are common. Approximately one million Australians are living with an eating disorder in any given year.

FACT #2

Eating disorders are serious, complex mental illnesses accompanied by physical and mental health complications which may be severe and life threatening. Eating disorders are characterised by disturbances in behaviours, thoughts and feelings towards body weight and shape, and/or food and eating.

FACT #3

Eating disorders are more prevalent among adolescents and young people, with the average onset for eating disorders between the ages of 12 and 25. However, any person, at any stage of their life, can experience an eating disorder.

If you think that you or someone you know may be experiencing an eating disorder, it is important to seek help immediately.

To find help in your local area, go to [NEDC Support and Services](#).

For information on eating disorders in Australia along with the references for these facts, go to [NEDC Eating Disorders in Australia booklet](#).

FACT #4

The factors that contribute to the development of an eating disorder will differ from person to person and involve biological, psychological and sociocultural factors. Risk factors may include dieting, body dissatisfaction, relationship difficulties or a family history of eating disorders.

FACT #5

Among people diagnosed with an eating disorder, only around 23% access appropriate treatment. Challenges to seeking help may include stigma, ambivalence about recovery, cost of services, limited availability of services and difficulty recognising the severity of the eating disorder.

FACT #6

Eating disorders can co-occur with other mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety, and with medical conditions such as diabetes and digestive issues.

FACT #7

It is possible to recover from an eating disorder, even if a person has been living with the illness for many years. Early intervention and access to appropriate support and treatment can reduce the severity and duration of an eating disorder.

Evidence

Experience

Expertise