



# Eating Disorder (ED)

Symptoms or Behaviors	About the Disorder	Educational Implications	Instructional Strategies & Classroom Accommodations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Perfectionistic attitude</li> <li>● Impaired concentration</li> <li>● Withdrawn</li> <li>● All or nothing thinking</li> <li>● Depressed mood or mood swings</li> <li>● Self-deprecating statements</li> <li>● Irritability</li> <li>● Lethargy</li> <li>● Anxiety</li> <li>● Fainting spells and dizziness</li> <li>● Headaches</li> <li>● Hiding food</li> <li>● Avoiding snacks or activities that include food</li> <li>● Frequent trips to the bathroom</li> </ul>	<p>Nearly all of us worry about our weight; however, when one becomes so obsessed with their weight and the need to be thin they may develop an eating disorder. The two most common are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. Once seen in teens and young adults, these disorders are increasingly seen in younger children as well. Children as young as 4 and 5 are expressing the need to diet, and it's estimated that 40% of 9 year olds have already dieted. Eating disorders aren't limited to girls- between 10 and 20% of adolescents with ED are boys.</p> <p>Individuals with anorexia fail to maintain minimally normal body weight. They engage in abnormal eating behavior and have excessive concerns about food. They are intensely afraid of even the slightest weight gain, and their perception of their body shape and size is significantly distorted. Many individuals with anorexia are compulsive and excessive about exercise. Children and teens with this disorder are perfectionists and overachieving. In teenage girls with anorexia, menstruation may cease, leading to the same kind of bone loss suffered by menopausal women.</p> <p>Youth with bulimia go on eating binges during which they compulsively consume large amounts of food within a short period of time. To avoid weight gain, they engage in inappropriate compensatory behavior, including fasting, self-induced vomiting, excessive exercise, and the use of laxatives, diuretics, and enemas.</p> <p>Athletes such as wrestlers, dancers, or gymnasts may fall into disordered eating patterns in an attempt to stay thin or "make their weight." This can lead to a full</p>	<p>Students with eating disorders may look like model students, often leading the class and being very self-demanding. Others may show poor academic performance. When students with eating disorders are preoccupied with body image and controlling their food intake, they may have short attention spans and poor concentration. These symptoms may also be due to a lack of nutrients from fasting and vomiting. These students often lack the energy and drive necessary to complete assignments or homework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stress acceptance in your classroom; successful people come in all sizes and shapes.</li> <li>● Watch what you say. Comments like "You look terrible," "What have you eaten today?" or "I wish I had that problem" are often hurtful and discouraging.</li> <li>● Stress progress, not perfection.</li> <li>● Avoid pushing students to excel beyond their capabilities.</li> <li>● Avoid high levels of competition.</li> <li>● Reduce stress where possible by reducing assignments or extending deadlines.</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Eating Disorders Resources/Gurze Books <a href="http://www.gurze.net">www.gurze.net</a></li> <li>● National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders: <a href="http://www.anad.org">www.anad.org</a> (<i>hotline counseling, referrals, information and advocacy</i>)</li> <li>● National Eating Disorders Association <a href="http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org">www.nationaleatingdisorders.org</a></li> <li>● <i>How Did This Happen? A Practical Guide to Understanding eating Disorders for Coaches, Parents and Teachers</i>, by the Institute for research and Education HealthSystem Minnesota, 1999.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health, St. Paul Minnesota, [www.macmh.org](http://www.macmh.org).

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	<p>blown disorder. Adolescents who have eating disorders are obsessed with food. Their lives revolve around thoughts and worries about their weight and their eating. Youth who suffer from eating disorders are at risk for alcohol and drug abuse as well as depression.</p> <p>If you suspect a student may be suffering from an eating disorder, refer that student immediately for a mental health assessment. Without medical intervention, an individual with an eating disorder faces serious health problems and, in extreme cases, death.</p>		