

Over the past couple of decades, we've become more aware of the dangers of eating disorders. Two of the most common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. People with anorexia starve themselves and become dangerously thin but continue to think they are overweight. The starvation often causes damage to their hearts and kidneys and causes their bones to become brittle and easily breakable. Approximately 20% of people who suffer from anorexia die from their illness. People who suffer from bulimia binge, or eat excessive amounts of food, and then purge. The purging damages their teeth and throats. Bulimia can also result in heart failure, internal bleeding, damage to the kidneys and liver, and death. The United States has the highest rate of eating disorders in the world. Because of this fact, many people believe that anorexia and bulimia are strictly American diseases. They might be surprised to learn that people all over the globe are being treated for these problems. Treatment centers for eating disorders can be found in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Another common misconception is that only girls and young women suffer from eating disorders. It's true that the majority of people with eating disorders are female, but boys and men can also have eating disorders. In fact, some studies report that 5–15% of people with anorexia and bulimia are male. If you're concerned that you or someone you know may have an eating disorder, there are many resources online that list common signs of eating disorders and places you can go for help.