

Introduction to Eating Disorders (Part Four) **Causes and Seeking Help**

Causes

It is unclear what exactly causes eating disorders, but they are usually more than just preoccupations with food and weight. According to the Mayo Clinic, eating disorders “may result from an interaction of biological, psychological, family, genetic, environmental and social factors.”

Studies have shown that people are more likely to develop eating disorders if a sibling or parent has an eating disorder. In addition, people with eating disorders may have other psychological and emotional health issues that contribute to their eating disorder such as depression, low self-esteem, perfectionism, anxiety, anger issues, substance abuse, and family and relationship conflicts. Other causes include peer pressure and the media. The media perceives thin women to be successful, beautiful, and desirable, which may contribute to pressures and desires among women to be thin ([Mayo Clinic](#)).

Seeking Help

If you or someone you know may be suffering from an eating disorder, seeking professional help is extremely important. It can be difficult to confront having an eating disorder, but seeing a doctor and having a medical evaluation is the only way to fight the battle and ensure help. Eating disorder treatment includes psychotherapy, nutrition education, hospitalization, and medications. Psychotherapy helps a person in monitoring eating habits and moods and can include family and group therapy. Nutrition education involves Dietitians and other health care providers in offering information on healthy diets and healthy eating plans. Hospitalization only occurs with severe cases of eating disorders, such as a person with anorexia nervosa refusing to eat or gain weight. Medications cannot cure an eating disorder, but they do control urges and preoccupations with food and can be used to help with depression or anxiety, which can be associated with eating disorders

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