



## About Eating Disorders

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### WHAT IS AN EATING DISORDER?

- An eating disorder refers to a complex, potentially life-threatening condition, characterised by severe disturbances in eating behaviours.
- Eating disorders are not primarily about food.
- Eating disorders can affect anyone, irrespective of race, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity.
- Sufferers of an eating disorder can and do recover.

### EATING DISORDERS ARE CHARACTERISED BY:

- Self-starvation - by fasting and/or food restriction.
- Purging - by self-induced vomiting, over-exercising or laxative abuse.
- Binging - by consuming quantities of food beyond what the body needs to satisfy hunger.

*(Bodywhys 2013)*

- There are complex physical, psychological and emotional aspects to the condition. The medical complications resulting from an eating disorder can be life threatening.
- Eating disorders almost always start out as diets, but these disorders are not just about food and weight.  
*(Costin 2007)*
- People of both sexes and every age, race, religion, ethnicity, and sexual orientation can suffer from an eating disorder.
- Eating disorders are not about vanity, they are ultimately about the search for healthy selfhood.
- They are not a fad or a phase that a person goes through, instead they have devastating consequences, affecting people relationships, dreams, goals and development, and are serious life threatening conditions.
- Eating disorders are NOT A CHOICE.