

# FINDING YOUR FUEL

## *Nutrition*



There is much information available about nutrition, but with so much of it conflicting, what is the correct information and who should we listen to? We have all heard that eggs are good for you, but then at times we hear they are bad for you. It seems as if diets have been similar to fashion. They follow trends. There has been the Atkins Diet, the Tuna Fish Diet, the Grapefruit Diet, South Beach, and of course, the low fat or fat-free Diet.

For most freshmen, the human body is still not completely developed so the best thing to do is to ensure the proper balance of different foods. The idea is to have balance in a person's diet. It can be difficult to have the appropriate balance. Sometimes a person takes in more protein on some days than others; sometimes it is more carbohydrates than usual, or fruit and vegetables.

The newest food pyramid is available for review at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>. It places more emphasis on whole grains, fruits and vegetables. It stresses the importance of limiting the amount of trans fats. It should be noted that no food group is eliminated. Because eliminating certain food groups from your diet for the purpose of losing weight can easily lead to eating disorders, it is important to strive for balance. Eating disorders are destructive and often-times, fatal.

### **EATING DISORDERS**

Across the U.S. today, millions of young women and men will start their mornings on the bathroom scale. They will skip breakfast to avoid calories and spend most of the day preoccupied with negative thoughts of both food and their bodies. Others will overeat or engage in compulsive exercise regimens to obtain the "ideal body." Conservative estimates indicate that 5 to 10% of all teenage girls and women suffer from eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia, and binge eating. Many more girls and



women suffer from unhealthy eating behavior and negative body image. Anorexia among men is on the rise. As many as 25% of binge eaters are male. Men are also more likely than women to suffer from excessive exercising. Unfortunately, college campuses can be breeding grounds for eating problems, as they often promote distorted ideals of beauty at a time when women and men are vulnerable to the pressures of success and acceptance. College women 18 to 22 years old have higher rates of bulimia than other women who are younger, not in college, or over 22. It is important to be aware that everyone is vulnerable to the development of an eating disorder, not just college students.

Eating disorders are caused by many things. A few of the most commonly named causes are interpersonal, psychological and societal. Interpersonal factors that could lead to the development of these disorders are difficulty expressing or feeling emotions, family discord, teased about weight and a history of sexual abuse. Examples of psychological factors would be low self-esteem, perfectionism, anxiety issues, depression and feelings of inadequacy. Most people blame society and the unrealistic ideals of beauty. Our culture has developed a very narrow view of what is “beautiful” in both women and men.

Listed below are some of the characteristic behaviors of each type of disorder. An individual may have all or some of the symptoms in one diagnostic category or a collection of symptoms from more than one category. If you experience any of these symptoms, it’s important to contact the appropriate professionals as soon as possible. These professionals can help you get on the road to recovery.

## **ANOREXIA NERVOSA**

- Intense and irrational fear of body fat and weight gain, preoccupation with weight management
- Feeling fat regardless of actual body weight, repeatedly weighing self
- Preparing food for others but refusing to eat it or avoiding events where food is being served
- Severe dieting, secretive vomiting, abusing of laxatives or diet pills
- Exercising excessively or compulsively
- Dressing in baggy clothes and complaining of being cold
- Difficulty making decisions, impaired attention
- Skipping classes or work
- Fainting



- Denying an eating problem and giving false reassurance when confronted
- Demonstrating mood changes such as depression and irritability

### **BULIMIA NERVOSA**

- Frequent weight fluctuation
- Eating large amounts of food in a short period of time
- Hoarding and stealing food for consumption
- Going to the bathroom frequently after meals
- Vomiting, using laxatives and/or enemas, exercising excessively to control the weight
- Complaining of chest pain, muscle pain, dizziness, trouble sleeping, headaches, fatigue
- Exhibiting broken blood vessels under the eyes, marks on the hands from self-induced vomiting, yellow-gray teeth from stomach acid
- Demonstrating mood changes, depression, sadness, guilt, low self-esteem
- Engaging in severe self-criticism
- Abusing alcohol, other drugs

### **BINGE EATING DISORDER**

- Eating large amounts of food when not hungry, eating to the point of discomfort
- Gaining significant weight
- Eating small portions in public
- Dieting preceding and following episodes of bingeing
- Eating for self-comfort, to alleviate negative feelings, or to punish self

If you or someone you know has an eating disorder, or thinks there may be a problem, seek help. The university offers support services and there are also many other support systems within the immediate community.

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