

Eating Disorders Not Otherwise Specified



National Eating Disorders Association

Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia include extreme emotions, attitudes, and behaviors surrounding weight and food issues. They are serious disorders and can have life-threatening consequences. The same is true for a category of eating disorders known as eating disorders not otherwise specified or ED-NOS. These serious eating disorders can include any combination of signs and symptoms typical of anorexia and bulimia, so it may be helpful to first look at anorexia and bulimia.

Symptoms associated with anorexia nervosa include:

- Refusal to maintain body weight at or above a minimally normal weight for height, body type, age, and activity level
- Intense fear of weight gain or being “fat”
- Feeling “fat” or overweight despite dramatic weight loss
- Loss of menstrual periods
- Extreme concern with body weight and shape

Symptoms associated with bulimia nervosa include:

- Repeated episodes of bingeing and purging
- Feeling out of control during a binge and eating beyond the point of comfortable fullness
- Purging after a binge, (typically by self-induced vomiting, abuse of laxatives, diet pills and/or diuretics, excessive exercise, or fasting)
- Frequent dieting
- Extreme concern with body weight and shape

The following are some common examples of eating disorders not otherwise specified, but your experience may be different. If you are concerned about your eating and exercise habits and your thoughts and emotions concerning food, activity and body image, we urge you to consult an ED expert.

Examples of ED-NOS

- Menstruation is still occurring despite meeting all other criteria for anorexia nervosa.
- All conditions are present to qualify for anorexia nervosa except the individual's current weight is in the normal range or above.
- Purging or other compensatory behaviors are not occurring at a frequency less than the strict criteria for bulimia nervosa
- Purging without Binging—sometimes known as purging disorder
- Chewing and spitting out large amounts of food but not swallowing

The commonality in all of these conditions is the serious emotional and psychological suffering and/or serious problems in areas of work, school or relationships. If something does not seem right, but your experience does not fall into a clear category, you still deserve attention. Call NEDA's Helpline and let us help you find the guidance that can make all the difference. All eating disorders require professional help.