

EATING DISORDERS

Athlete and Coach Resource Sheet



WHAT ARE SOME COMMON TYPES OF EATING DISORDERS?*

- Anorexia Nervosa
 - Persistent caloric restriction accompanied by an intense fear of weight gain, disturbance in perceived weight or physique, and limited awareness of the seriousness of the condition.
- Bulimia Nervosa
 - Recurrent binge eating and inappropriate compensatory behaviours (vomiting or excessive exercise) to prevent weight gain. Negative evaluations of weight, size, and shape.
- Binge-eating Disorder
 - Recurrent episodes of binge eating without compensatory behaviours. Occurs quickly and regardless if painfully full, often resulting in feelings of self-disgust and marked distress.



CASE ILLUSTRATION

The athletic trainer of a gymnastics team learned that Sarah would not eat before a competition, as she noted she would feel too heavy to perform. Sarah also declined to eat while they were on the road, providing a different reason for not doing so each time. When Sarah did consume food, she rushed to the washroom by herself almost immediately after. Her teammates also noticed that Sarah was often cold and complained of muscle cramps in the change room. She was struggling with her performance and thought she could improve by losing weight and becoming leaner. The athletic trainer conducted a medical exam, which concluded an irregular menstrual cycle and a significant weight loss of 10lbs over the season.



WHAT ARE THE PHYSICAL SIGNS/SYMPTOMS?*

- Amenorrhea (missed menstrual periods)
- Dehydration
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Hypothermia
- Stress fractures
- Significant weight loss
- Muscle cramps, weakness, or fatigue
- Dental and gum problems



WHY ARE ATHLETES AT RISK?*

- Sport-related factors
- Sociocultural factors
- Genetics
- Prevalence

*Sources: NEDIC, NCAA

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WHAT ARE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL/BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?*

- Avoidance of social eating situations
- Reports feeling "fat" despite being thin
- Excessive use of restroom
- Preoccupation with weight and eating
- Use of laxatives and diet pills
- Anxiety and/or depression
- Difficulty concentrating

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS IN THE SPORT ENVIRONMENT?*

- Athlete body stereotypes/belief that leanness will improve performance
- Real and perceived pressure from coaches, parents, and teammates to lose weight
- Observations of eating/exercise behaviours of others
- Some sports require athletes to wear form-fitting uniforms

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES*

- Electrolyte imbalance with possible heart failure or irregular heartbeats
- Premature osteoporosis
- Peptic ulcers
- Pancreatitis
- Gastric rupture

HELPFUL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Foundry Kelowna - <https://foundrybc.ca/kelowna/>

Foundry Penticton - <https://foundrybc.ca/penticton/>

SportMedBC - <https://sportmedbc.com/practitioners>

Canadian Sport Psychology Association - <https://www.cspa-acps.com/find-a-consultant>

Canadian Centre for Mental Health in Sport - <https://www.ccmhs-ccsms.ca/>
<https://jessieslegacy.com>

<http://bodysense.ca/>

<http://www.nedic.ca/>

*Source: NCAA