



YOU MAY BE THE FIRST TO RECOGNIZE HER EATING DISORDER

OB/GYN Eating Disorder Guide



Eating disorders are *lethal*.

One in 21 pregnant women meets criteria for an eating disorder, and more than 25% of women engage in behaviors related to eating disorders such as purging, binge eating, dieting, and excessive exercise during pregnancy. As many as 30% of women with previous eating disorders relapse during pregnancy.

Obstetricians and Gynecologists are in a unique position to identify patients who may be at risk for eating disorders.

Warning signs during pregnancy:

- Preconception or first trimester BMI less than 18
- Inadequate weight gain, particularly in the second trimester
- History of amenorrhea prior to pregnancy
- History of miscarriage prior to pregnancy
- History of infertility prior to pregnancy
- History of an eating disorder
- Abnormal lab results
- Inadequate fetal growth
- Fear of gaining weight
- Preoccupation with feeling fat
- Family member concerns

Gynecologic presentations:

- Weight change
- Menstrual irregularities
- Polycystic ovaries
- Infertility
- Pelvic growth retardation

Obstetric presentations:

- Unplanned pregnancy
- Hyperemesis Gravidarum
- Gestational Diabetes Mellitus
- Inadequate or excessive weight gain
- Miscarriage
- Preterm delivery
- High risk for Cesarean section
- Breech delivery

Presentation in fetus/neonate:

- Small for gestational age
- Microcephaly
- Neural tube defects
- Intrauterine growth restriction
- Prenatal mortality
- Birth defects (*due to laxative use, appetite suppressants*)
- Low APGAR score
- Low birth weight
- Small head circumference

Postpartum complications:

- Postpartum depression and/or anxiety
- Increased eating disorder symptoms

Ways OB/GYNs can help mothers & babies thrive:



Know the warning signs of eating disorders.



Talk with patients about eating disorders.



Assess patients for eating disorders.



Recommend lab tests and further evaluation by an eating disorder specialist.



Collaborate with dietitians, therapists, physicians, and Veritas Collaborative for case consults.