

# 7 Eating Disorder Truths



FALSE

TRUE

**FALSE 1** Eating Disorders are a choice

**Eating disorders (EDs) are complex medical and psychiatric illnesses.** Most experts agree that a mix of biological, psychological and sociocultural factors contribute to the development of eating disorders. Decades of genetic research show that biological factors play a significant role in the development of an eating disorder.

**FALSE 2** My child is too young to develop an eating disorder

**Eating disorders can develop or re-emerge at any age.** At Veritas Collaborative, we have seen individuals diagnosed as young as six. Furthermore, recently, hospital admissions for older adults has increased.

**FALSE 3** You can tell who has an eating disorder simply by looking at them

**Many people with eating disorders look healthy, but are extremely ill.** Though someone suffering from anorexia may appear thin, this only accounts for a small portion of those battling eating disorders. EDs can have emotional, behavioral and medical consequences that you cannot see just by looking at a person.

**FALSE 4** If a man has an eating disorder, he must be gay

**Eating disorders can affect anyone, regardless of their gender identity or sex.** Although gay, bisexual, and transgender males are statistically more likely to develop an eating disorder, the vast majority of male eating disorder sufferers are heterosexual.

**FALSE 5** Eating disorders are only about food

**Symptoms of an eating disorder can extend far beyond food.** Studies have linked eating disorders to perfectionism and obsessionality, which can lead to a fixation on grades, or sports performance. People with eating disorders often live a life controlled by food and weight. But, these behaviors may be covering up much deeper problems.

**FALSE 6** Parents are to blame

**There is no single cause to blame.** It is estimated that between 50-80% of a person's risk for developing an eating disorder is due to genetic factors. Parents and families can, however, play an integral role in helping a loved one recover.

**FALSE 7** The only eating disorder symptom I should look for in a loved one is weight loss.

Although anorexia nervosa and other restrictive eating disorders are characterized by weight loss, **many people with eating disorders don't lose weight** and may even gain weight as a result of their disorder.

## About Veritas

We envision a world in which everyone with an eating disorder (and their families and communities) have access to best-practice care and hold hope for a cure.

Our multidisciplinary treatment teams in North Carolina, Virginia, and Georgia share a passion for a collaborative community of care, and are committed to providing individualized, evidence-based treatment in a gender-diverse and inclusive environment.