

Recognizing Eating Disorders



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Key Message

You can't tell if someone has an eating disorder by how they look. Anyone can experience one – any body, any background, any gender.

Eating disorders aren't about body size, they are about how someone *feels* and *behaves* around food and themselves.

- Nearly 1 million Canadians are living with a diagnosable eating disorder
- Feeding and eating disorders are diagnosed by medical professionals or psychologists
- There are many ways eating disorders can appear – what matters most is how someone feels and behaves, not a single label.



What to Notice



Emotional Signs

- Feeling anxious, sad, or irritable
- Perfectionism or “all-or-nothing” thinking
- Withdrawing from friends or activities



Physical Signs


- Tiredness, dizziness, or feeling cold
- Stomach pain or frequent digestive issues



Behavioural Signs

- Skipping meals or saying “I’m not hungry”
- Avoiding eating with others
- Dressing in layers to hide body shape, even when it is unusual considering the weather
 - Ex. sweater and sweatpants during a hot day
- Talking a lot about food, calories, or appearance.

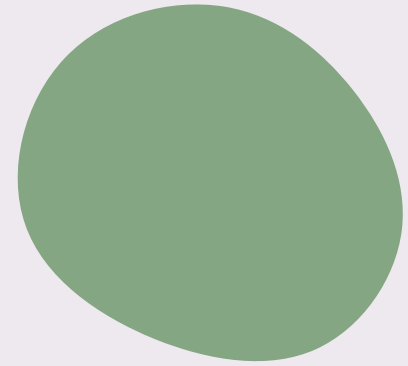




Even one or two signs can be a reason
to show care – it is better to check in
than to stay silent.

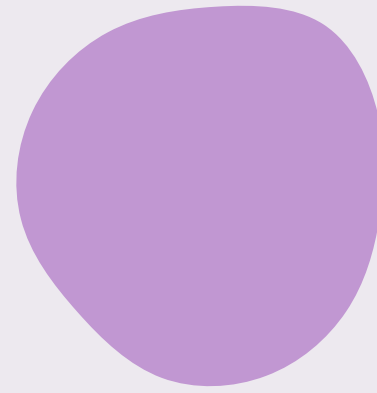


How to Respond



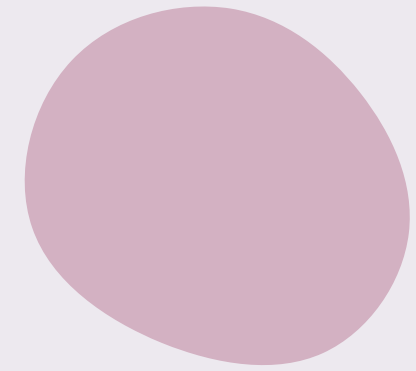
Say things like:

"I've noticed you seem down lately – are you okay?"
"I care about you and I am here if you want to talk."







Talk to a
Trusted Adult

Teacher,
counsellor, parent,
or a friend.

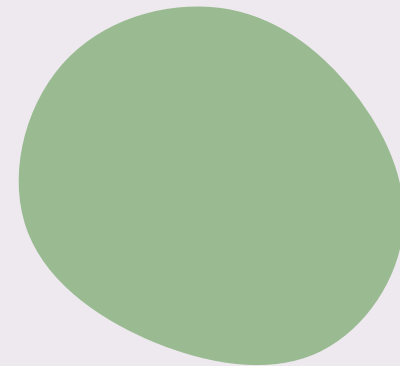


Do not:

-  Comment on weight, size, or appearance
-  What or how much they are eating
-  Get angry, guilt them, or argue
-  Keep it a secret if you're seriously concerned



How to Respond (Pt. 2)



Show *care* rather
than *judgement*

Find a quiet, private moment to talk.

Listen without interrupting or giving advice right
away.

Stay calm – even if they get defensive.

Encourage professional help or offer to go with
them to talk to a counsellor.



Getting Help

Reaching out is a sign of **strength**, not of weakness. You do not have to handle it on your own.

NEDIC (National Eating Disorder Information Centre)

1-866-NEDIC-20 or 416-340-4156

Live chat: **nedic.ca**

nedic@uhn.ca

Or talk to a:

- Teacher or counsellor
- Parent, coach, or nurse
- Friend you trust



Thank you!

Remember that you do not have to diagnose. You have to *notice, care, and connect*.

