

STATISTICS: EATING DISORDERS AND THEIR PRECURSORS

THE PREVALENCE OF EATING DISORDERS

In the United States, *conservative estimates* indicate that after puberty, **5-10%** of girls and women (that translates to **5-10 MILLION** girls and women) and **1 MILLION** boys and men are struggling with eating disorders including anorexia, bulimia, binge eating disorder, or borderline conditions (Crowther et al., 1992; Fairburn et al., 1993; Gordon, 1990; Hoek, 1995; Shisslak et al., 1995). Because of the secretiveness and shame associated with eating disorders, many cases are probably not reported. In addition, many individuals struggle with body dissatisfaction and sub-clinical disordered eating attitudes and behaviors. For example, **80%** of American women are dissatisfied with their appearance (Smolak, 1996).

THE DRIVE FOR THINNESS

- **42%** of 1st-3rd grade girls want to be thinner (Collins, 1991).
- **81%** of 10 year olds are afraid of being fat (Mellin et al., 1991).
- The average American woman is **5'4"** tall and weighs **140** pounds. The average American model is **5'11"** tall and weighs **117** pounds.
- Most fashion models are thinner than **98%** of American women (Smolak, 1996).

DIETING

- **51%** of 9 and 10 year-old girls feel better about themselves if they are on a diet (Mellin et al., 1991).
- **46%** of 9-11 year-olds are "sometimes" or "very often" on diets, and **82%** of their families are "sometimes" or "very often" on diets (Gustafson-Larson & Terry, 1992).
- **91%** of women recently surveyed on a college campus had attempted to control their weight through dieting, **22%** dieted "often" or "always" (Kurth et al., 1995).
- **95%** of all dieters will regain their lost weight in 1-5 years (Grodstein, 1996).
- **35%** of "normal dieters" progress to pathological dieting. Of those, **20-25%** progress to partial or full-syndrome eating disorders (Shisslak & Crago, 1995).
- **25%** of American men and **45%** of American women are on a diet on any given day (Smolak, 1996).
- Americans spend over **\$40 BILLION** on dieting and diet-related products each year (Smolak, 1996).

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For more information, contact the National Eating Disorders Association at 603 Stewart St., Suite 803, Seattle, WA 98101
Information and Referral Helpline: 800-931-2237 or www.NationalEatingDisorders.org

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