



The Perfect 10 Diet

MICHAEL AZIZ, M.D.

Male Anorexia On The Rise How to Detect, and How to Treat

According to the National Eating Disorder Association, more than a million men and boys battle eating disorders; 40% of binge eaters are men and anorexia affects 1 male for every 3 females. The term “manorexia” was coined in stories of male celebrities rumored to have the disorder, others such as Dennis Quaid and Elton John have admitted to bouts of bulimia and anorexia.

But it’s not simply a celebrity or model trend. Studies have reported that today 25% of eating disorder sufferers are men; in 1990, it was 10%.

While most people understand the prevalence of eating disorders in females, few recognize that males suffer from the same disorders. One reason for the lack of attention to this is that these disorders are easily masked or misdiagnosed in men. While females often use extreme dieting as a gateway into an eating disorder, which can draw suspicion from family and friends, males are more likely to fixate on exercise, which may appear deceptively healthy.

“A guy who works out two or three hours a day may be regarded as ‘into fitness,’ and won’t raise the same red flags as a woman who refuses to eat,” says Dr. Michael Aziz, a New York City physician and author of *The Perfect 10 Diet*. “Another factor that complicates the identification and diagnosis of male eating disorders is the fact that the diagnostic criteria for eating disorders are designed for women. For example, amenorrhea, the loss of menstrual period, is often a result of anorexia in women.”

The DSM-IV, which is used for diagnosis of psychiatric issues including eating disorders, has limited clinical utility for doctors. Also male patients rarely seek help and in most cases deny having an eating disorder due to shame.

Dr. Aziz is available to answer questions about the rise of this disorder among men, including:

Why male eating disorders are on the rise

No one knows for sure why the numbers have increased so much, but several factors could be contributing to the rise. For one, men may finally be feeling the pressure of physical perfection that women have been dealing with for decades. With every image of a thin female in the media, there is a man with chiseled abs and a super-lean physique. Even if they don’t want to admit it, some men feel pressure either from within or from society to achieve the same lean, muscular look.

(more)

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Another contributor is a man's inability to share his feelings. Women have been discussing their body-image issues for years. Men are often too embarrassed to admit they suffer from similar issues. Now we are seeing more and more men open up about their struggle with physical perfection.

The dangers of anorexia

Anorexia causes loss of body fat then muscle mass, disturbance in hormones, suppressed immunity, heart failure, and if not treated, eventually death.

How to identify a man with anorexia

It's not easy. Family members and friends are usually the first to recognize the problem and the first to help. You may start to notice an increase in fatigue, a sudden change in diet, irritability, and then, of course, a physical change. If suspected, professional help will give a definitive diagnosis in order to rule out a medical problem that might be causing the weight loss.

Treatment for the disorder

Professional psychiatric help is the first step. Sometimes, drug addictions or depression are also present and have to be addressed.

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