

AWARENESS WEEK SCHEDULED FOR FEB. 22 THROUGH 28

Eating disorders a deadly medical condition

Eating disorders are not a fad, new diet, lifestyle choice, bad habit or even a "problem" that a person can "outgrow."

Eating disorders are a complex psychiatric illness; we must eat to live—yet 24 million people in the US of all ages and genders struggle with anorexia, bulimia or binge eating disorder and do not have a healthy relationship with food. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness.

Early intervention matters

Eating disorders have heartbreaking consequences, but they don't have to. The right intervention strategies can improve the quality of life—even save a life. I like to use an analogy of a marble rolling down a hill of sand to illustrate the effectiveness of early intervention.

If a marble is at the top of a hill, it will roll down whatever path it is pushed. Once a groove is made, the marble will naturally go down that particular path. Eventually the channel becomes so established it is almost impossible for it to go down any other way. But, before too much time has elapsed, if the marble is pushed in just slightly different direction, a new



Eating Disorders

Erin Kleifield

path will be formed and it will naturally go down this one instead.

Early intervention with eating disorders, or disordered eating as it is also called, works the same way. It can help the brain establish new pathways. With encouragement and practice, the patient will adopt and maintain healthier eating behavior.

Variable factors contribute to eating disorders

Disordered eating, which often begins in adolescence when social, academic and family pressures are overwhelming, is a way of regulating negative emotions and coping with stress and disruptive life events. It develops from what we in the medical community call a complex array of predisposing, precipitating, and perpetuating variables.

Predisposing variables are personality attributes—being self-critical, a high achiever, or perfectionist—for example. Other common predisposing factors include suffer-



Contributed photo

Eating disorders affect 24 million Americans who struggle with anorexia, bulimia or binge eating.

ing from depression and anxiety, past struggles with weight, experiencing a trauma, a family history of eating disorders or poor family dynamics. Genetics and psychobiology play a predisposing role if there is a tendency to like or crave or like certain foods. Cultural messages, which are often unconscious, are also considered predisposing factors.

Precipitating behaviors are things like obsessive dieting or restricting certain food groups. Specific triggering events where disordered eating develops—such as death or illness of a loved one, or weight loss resulting from illness or medical problems, would also be considered precipitating.

Perpetuating variables are the cognitive and be-

havioral influences that make it difficult to combat eating disorders. Beliefs and attitudes about food, black and white thinking, fear of weight gain, and overvalued ideas about weight and shape are perpetuating variables. These attitudes often precede eating disorders but can also develop as a consequence of disordered eating and weight loss.

Eating disorders lead to physical and mental impairments

Lack of proper food intake has severe consequences. Body functions break down. Starvation affects serotonin and dopamine levels in the brain, the neurotransmitters that are critical for positive emotions and per-

sonal happiness. A chemical imbalance can also lead to the development of other co-occurring mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression and substance abuse.

Feb. 22 - 28 is Eating Disorders Awareness Week

There are steps parents can take to prevent eating disorders from developing. Change behaviors, beliefs and thoughts directly related to food that are destructive. Address the psychosocial and personality variables that contribute to the onset of disordered eating. You may need the help of a professional clinician, but a few suggestions are given below. As with the marble rolling down hill, take early action before the pathways become embedded and a life is lost.

So how can you help foster a positive body image in your kids? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Try to avoid criticizing yourself or others about weight or shape in front of kids.
2. Avoid talking negatively about food. "I can't eat potatoes because they're carbs" or "That cake will go straight to my thighs." It's more important to teach the impor-

ance of healthy eating and exercise without references to weight.

3. Compliment children on their talents and accomplishments. A little praise goes a long way especially when it's well deserved.

4. Let your kids know that weight gain and changes to body shape are a natural part of the growing process.

5. Talk to your kids about their use of social media and what they see on TV. Only 5 percent of American women have the body type that is portrayed in advertising as the ideal size and shape for women. When I look at movies even from the 1980s, the tolerance for diverse types of bodies was much richer than it is now.

Dr. Kleifield received her BA from Stanford, Ph.D. from Rutgers, and held a Fellowship at Cornell. She is a Clinical Instructor of Psychology and Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College, and is a member of the Academy of Eating Disorders, the Connecticut Psychological Association, the New York City Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Association, the Association for Contextual and Behavioral Therapy and the International Society for Schema Therapy.

Drivers, dispatchers sought for nonprofit

NORWALK — FISH, an all-volunteer organization that transports Norwalk residents who need rides to their medical appointments, is seeking drivers and dispatchers.

Drivers will take Norwalk residents to and from medical appointments. Dispatchers work from

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home and schedule appointments and drivers.

Dispatchers work from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Drivers work from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. Schedule is developed to meet volunteers' available times. Mileage is reimbursed.

For more information,

call Tuesday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at (203) 229-9727.

Volunteers needed at Person-to-Person

NORWALK — Person-to-Person (P2P) relies on volunteers from the community to provide pro-

grams and services to thousands of people in Lower Fairfield County.

Person-to-Person has two locations.

In Norwalk (76 South

Main St.) you may volunteer at Reception or in the Food Pantry.

In Darien (1864 Post Road) you may volunteer at Reception, in the Food Pantry or in the Clothing Center.

To volunteer in Nor-

walk, which serves people in Norwalk, Weston, Westport and Wilton, e-mail edkearns@p2pHelps.org.

To volunteer in Darien, which serves people in Darien, New Canaan and Stamford, e-mail janetking@p2pHelps.org.

Naturopathic medicine and acne

Acne is an inflammatory disease of the oil producing (sebaceous) glands and hair follicles of the skin, which presents with pustules, whiteheads, blackheads, papules and/or inflammatory cysts, most frequently on the face.

A rise in oil secretions may accumulate beneath a blocked pore, permitting bacteria to increase in number and cause inflammation. More than 4 out of 5 individuals between the ages of 20 and 24 are afflicted by acne at least once in their life. It primarily affects people in puberty, but can happen in individuals at any age. Acne may cause scarring, so action should be taken to diminish the chance of this occurring, including the use of Vitamin E oil.

Risk factors

Risk factors for acne include hormonal activity such as menstrual cycles, puberty, pregnancy, menopause, starting/stopping birth control pills and abnormally high levels of testosterone.

Other risk factors are stress, overproduction of oil, accumulation of dead skin cells and buildup of bacteria in the pores. Skin irritation or scratching can activate inflammation. Certain medications, including anabolic steroids, anti-seizure medications, some anti-tuberculosis drugs, lithium and iodine-containing medications can cause acne. Exposure to high chlorine compounds may cause severe



Margaret Rague

Aloha Natural Healing

and long lasting acne.

Treatments

Naturopathic treatments for acne include Vitamin A. Vitamin A supplements should not be used at the same time as prescription medicines, especially Accutane®, because of a heightened risk of toxicity. High dosages of Vitamin A can cause toxicity. High quality studies indicate that the topical or oral use of zinc at recommended levels seems to be an effective treatment for acne. Traditional treatments of acne include guggul, topical applications of diluted tea tree oil, boswellia, burdock and omega-3 fatty acids, such as are in high quality fish oils. Probiotics may be effective in reducing the undesirable side effects associated with the antibiotic treatment of acne. Saw palmetto may help balance male hormonal levels and thus be therapeutic for acne.

Preventive measures

Preventive measures include washing the face with a very mild soap and water several times daily to avoid pore clogging and oil buildup. Avoid repeated exposure to an environment that promotes pore clogging and oil production. Nutritional changes and the addition

of certain vitamins, minerals and botanical supplements may prevent acne by improving immunity and decreasing stress. Taking a multivitamin with the antioxidants A, C and E, the B complex vitamins and trace minerals such as selenium, zinc and magnesium can assist in protecting the body from acne.

Massage, meditation, exercise and music therapy can also decrease stress, which has been associated with acne. Consuming less dairy products, or using organic dairy products that do not contain so many hormones, may decrease acne.

Avoid refined foods such as white breads, sugar and pasta. Eat antioxidant containing foods, such as fruits and vegetables.

Studies have reported that oxidation may contribute to the causation of acne. Avoiding seafood may decrease the occurrence of acne. It contains high levels of iodine and has been reported to increase the chances of acne. Overconsumption of sugar, such as milk chocolate, may cause poor glycemic control, which may increase the chance of an acne outbreak.

— Sources: Natural Standard Database
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Migraines are severe headaches that come with other symptoms, such as nausea, dizziness, and sensitivity to light. Research shows that nearly 30 million people suffer from migraines, and some sufferers may not realize what causes, or triggers, migraines. We've listed the top 10 migraine triggers, based on years of research by notable experts. Are some of these triggers causing your migraines and you didn't even know it? Read on and see!

1. Stress

Stress, in a clinical definition, is your body's nervous system adapting and defending the body via a physiological reaction to physiological or psychological stimuli, aka stress. Most people will encounter migraines at the same time they're undergoing stress, however, this isn't the same for all individuals.

2. Auditory Triggers

56 percent of patients in a study indicated they were triggered by noises and sounds.

3. Fatigue or tiredness

The correlation between fatigue and migraines isn't exactly clear, because patients reported feeling tired before the onset of a migraine. It could be that the fatigue is indeed a warning sign of the migraine that's about to occur.

4. Skipping meals

Fasting, or skipping a meal, is a common factor of migraines for nearly one-half of the 3,374 individuals surveyed in one particular study.



Living Well

Brenda, Erik Slovin

5. Hormones

Hormones affect many elements of a woman's body, and it seems that one of those things is migraines. Sufferers in a study of 4,461 women noted that phases of their menstrual cycle commonly brought on migraines.

6. Sleep Disturbances

Lack of sleep is a known trigger of migraines, because your body doesn't have enough energy to focus through the day, rebound after stressful events, etc. 43 percent of respondents in a study of 5,347 patients mentioned sleep disturbances triggered a migraine.

7. Weather

Weather is a common trigger of migraines, particularly because the barometric pressure changes. Even The Weather Channel has published articles detailing why the weather is such a trigger on migraines, and doctors advise taking migraine headache if you know the pressure is about to drop severely in your area.

8. Visual Triggers

Sensitivity to light often accompanies migraines, so it's understandable that light is a trigger for migraines in many individuals. Flickering lights and bright glares were commonly stated in the study of 5,176 patients.

9. Scents

It seems that all of the senses are affected by outside stimuli and can trigger migraines, including our sense of smell. Perfumes, nail polish, and other strong odors are common triggers.

10. Alcohol

Yes, it's true, alcohol is a trigger of migraines. However, it's quite low on the list and this trigger can differ among individuals with migraines. Drink in moderation to reduce the chance of alcohol triggering you.

It's worth noting, foods and physical activity are also triggers for migraine sufferers, however, different foods will trigger some people but not others. As we look at the above list, we can see one common thread for migraines, and that's a stimuli that interrupts our bodily and mental processes. This is just the tip of the iceberg for migraine research, but this information will help guide us for further study. If you have a brain that isn't prone to migraines, then these things won't affect you, but if you do suffer from migraines, you're more likely to be triggered.

Drawing upon her chiropractic, and nutritional background, Dr. Slovin uses some of the most sophisticated, yet practical, scientifically based, nutritional therapies to prevent and reverse migraines.
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