

# Women's Health

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**Did You Know?**

**Health Center**  
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## **National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (NEDAW) February 22-28<sup>th</sup>, 2009** *...until eating disorders are history*

The aim of NEDAW is to ultimately prevent eating disorders and body image issues while reducing the stigma surrounding eating disorders and improving access to treatment. Eating disorders are serious, life-threatening illnesses--not choices--and it's important to recognize the pressures, attitudes and behaviors that shape the disorder.

*Did you know that 15% of women ages 17 to 24 have an eating disorder?*

*Did you know that 40% of female college students have eating disorders?*

*Did you know that 91% of female college students have attempted to control their weight through dieting?*

▶ "Eating disorders involve serious disturbances in eating behavior, such as extreme and unhealthy reduction of food intake or severe overeating, as well as feelings of distress or extreme concern about body weight or shape." (National Institute of Mental Health)

▶ While eating disorders may begin with preoccupations with food and weight, they are most often about much more than food. They are complex conditions that arise from a combination of long-standing behavioral, biological, emotional, psychological, interpersonal and social factors.

▶ People with eating disorders often use food, and the control of food, in an attempt to compensate for feelings and emotions that may otherwise seem over-whelming. For some, dieting, bingeing, and purging may begin as a way to cope with painful emotions and to feel in control of one's life, but ultimately, these behaviors will damage a person's physical and emotional health, self-esteem, and sense of competence and control.

▶ It is important to learn to listen to your body: Eat what you want, when you are truly hungry. Stop when you're full. Eat exactly what appeals to you. Do this instead of any diet, and you are unlikely to ever have a weight problem, let alone an eating disorder.

▶ Appreciate what your body can do each day...it is functional, not just ornamental.

▶ Find a method of exercise that you enjoy and do it regularly. Exercise to make your body healthy and strong and because it makes you feel good, not to lose weight or reshape your body.

▶ Surround yourself with positive people who are supportive and recognize the importance of liking yourself just as you naturally are.

▶ Consider all the things that you could accomplish with the time and energy you currently spend worrying about your body and appearance.

▶ Recognize that bodies come in all shapes and sizes.

▶ Look critically at advertisements that suggest you look a certain way.

▶ If you or someone you know is struggling with weight and body image issues please seek support. **Contact the Counseling Center at 574-284-4565** to talk to a professional.