

DENTAL COMPLICATIONS OF EATING DISORDERS

Dietary habits can and do play a role in oral health. Changes in the mouth are oftentimes the first physical signs of an eating disorder. The harmful habits and nutritional deficiencies that often accompany disordered eating can have severe consequences on one's dental health. An eating

disorder may cause lingering or
1 even permanent damage to the teeth and mouth. Early detection of eating disorders may ensure a smoother and more successful recovery period for the body and the teeth. Damage to the teeth and mouth can be tempered by arming yourself with the right information and receiving appropriate guidance from your oral health professional.



DENTAL EFFECTS OF EATING DISORDERS

2 Without the proper nutrition, gums and other soft tissue inside your mouth may bleed easily. The glands that produce saliva may swell. Individuals may experience chronic dry mouth.

3 Food restriction often leads to nutritional deficiency. Nutrients that promote oral health include calcium, iron and B vitamins. Insufficient calcium promotes tooth decay and gum disease; even if an anorexia patient does consume enough calcium, they also need enough vitamin D to help the body absorb it. Insufficient iron can foster the development of sores inside the mouth. Insufficient amounts of vitamin B3 (also known as niacin) can contribute to bad breath and the development of canker sores. Gums can become red and swollen—almost glossy-looking—which is often a sign of gingivitis. The mouth can also be extremely dry, due to dehydration, and lips may become reddened, dry and cracked.

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Frequent vomiting leads to strong stomach acid repeatedly flowing over the teeth. The tooth's outer covering (enamel) can be lost and teeth can change in color, shape and length, becoming brittle, translucent and weak. Eating hot or cold food or drink may become uncomfortable. Tissue loss and erosive lesions on the surface of the mouth may occur. The edges of teeth often become thin and break off easily. In extreme cases the pulp can be exposed and cause infection, discoloration or even pulp death. Tooth decay can actually be aggravated by extensive tooth brushing or rinsing following vomiting.

VOCABULARY:

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Harmful: Dañino

Lingering: Persistente/ prolongado

Teeth: Dentadura

Mouth: Boca

Sores: Úlceras

Brittle: Quebradizo

Gums: Encías

Ensure: Asegurar

Tempered: Reducir

Tissue: Tejido

Canker: Afta