

FACT SHEET

CANADIAN BELIEFS ABOUT EATING DISORDERS IPSOS REID RESEARCH FINDINGS

- 1 in 2 (50%) Canadians know someone (including themselves) who has (or has had) an eating disorder.
- Most (89%) believe that eating disorders are preventable and treatable (97%).
- 4 in 10 mistakenly believe that eating disorders are a choice while 21% believe they are genetic.
- Most Canadians consider eating disorders to be life threatening (95%) and consider them to be a mental illness (76%).
- 1 in 3 (35%) admit they wouldn't be able to recognize the signs of an eating disorder in a friend or family member.
- 91% of Canadians believe that the media pressures to have the 'perfect body' are to blame for developing an eating disorder.
- When thinking about children ages 6 to 18 years of age, only 2% believe that they struggle most with eating disorders, while 41% believe they struggle most with body image and self-esteem and 33% believe they struggle most with bullying.

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The Ipsos Reid poll was conducted between November 18 and 21, 2014 on behalf of National Eating Disorder Information Centre among a sample of 1,005 Canadians. The poll is accurate to within +/- 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadian adults been polled.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

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EATING DISORDERS

- Nearly 1 million Canadians are diagnosed with an eating disorder at any given time. However, millions of others go undiagnosed and struggle in silence because of the shame and stigma associated with eating disorders. Canada’s only toll-free helpline dedicated to eating disorder information and support is available Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at 1-866-NEDIC-20.
- Eating disorders do not discriminate. They affect people of all ages, races, ethnicities, orientations and abilities. Eating disorders can manifest themselves in different ways – for example, boys and men might try to bulk up and look ‘buff’ with excessive weight training, restrictive dieting and supplements.
- Eating disorders are not about food or vanity. There are genetic, psychological, social and cultural factors that may contribute to the development of an eating disorder¹. Eating disorders are serious, complex and life threatening mental health conditions that are misunderstood, underfunded and underserved.
- 87% of women are dissatisfied with their bodies and 70% are dieting to lose weight². Yet, most gain all, if not more, of the weight back within five years³. Adolescent girls who diet are at 324% greater risk for obesity than those who do not diet. And, chronic dieting can lead to the development of an eating disorder⁴.
- It can take between 2 and 7 years to recover from an eating disorder and 50% of individuals will fully recover⁵. Early intervention is related to positive outcomes in treatment⁶. NEDIC.ca has a comprehensive list of service providers across Canada that can help individuals seeking information, support, diagnosis and treatment.

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¹ Campbell, K. & Peebles, R. (2014). *Eating disorders in children and adolescents: state of the art review* *Pediatrics*, 134, 582-92

² <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=6436562&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=2>

³ The Renfrew Center Foundation for Eating Disorders, “*Eating Disorders 101 Guide: A Summary of Issues, Statistics and Resources*,” 2003.

⁴ Stice, Cameron, R. P., Killen, J. D., Hayward, C. & Taylor, C. B. (1999). *Naturalistic weight-reduction efforts prospectively predict growth in relative weight and onset of obesity among female adolescents*. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 67.

⁵ <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=6436562&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=>

⁶ Campbell, K. & Peebles, R. (2014). *Eating disorders in children and adolescents: state of the art review* *Pediatrics*, 134, 582-92