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To cite this Article / Käytä viittauksessa alkuperäistä lähdettä:

Tuomi, J. (2021) Hey dude, what's wrong – you don't eat. PreconNet blog, 30.11.2021.

URL: <https://webpages.tuni.fi/preco/2021/11/30/hey-dude-whats-wrong-you-dont-eat/>

# Hey dude, what's wrong – you don't eat

30.11.2021

Eating disorders are often thought to be female problems but eating disorder symptoms in boys and men has increased. About 10% of boys and men have an eating disorder. Male eating disorders may manifest differently than female. Eating disorders in males often manifests as extreme pursuit of muscularity rather than leanness. It can be difficult to identify it as an eating disorder. Therefore, health professionals may not necessarily recognize boys' eating disorders. Plus eating disorders are often still thought of as female diseases. Attitudes about eating disorders can cause boys to feel ashamed of their eating disorders, because boys may think they are perceived as female symptoms.

Eating disorders pose serious threats to sexual and reproductive health for both males and females. Eating disorders have often a negative effect on sexuality. People with an eating disorder are more likely to have a decreased sexual desire and problems related to their relationships and sexual interaction than people without eating disorders. It has been discovered that the lower the BMI is in anorexia nervosa, the more difficulties there are regarding sexuality. Anorexia also reduces sexual function in boys and men. The acute phase of anorexia is often associated with a decrease in sexual interest. It also causes infertility due to weight loss and dramatic changes in hormonal balance. Overweight caused by bulimia nervosa may cause physical and self-harm. Being overweight can cause metabolic syndrome and testosterone deficiency, both of which can cause erectile dysfunction.

Lifestyle factors affect fertility, most notably weight. Being overweight and underweight impairs male fertility. Being overweight has been found to alter the hormonal balance, which impairs fertility and may cause infertility. Being overweight reduces testosterone production in men. It also impairs sperm production. Being overweight can also be associated with high levels of insulin, which can be a cause of infertility, and with low semen volume, low sperm density, and low total sperm count. The circumference of the waist is related to the total number of sperm. The larger the waist circumference, the lower the total number of sperm. In addition, being overweight reduces sperm motility and causes DNA disturbances in sperm. Being overweight also causes erectile dysfunction. In men, too much estrogen increases feminine traits and impairs sexual ability and semen quality. If a pregnancy is wished for, it is good to remember that even a man's overweight affects the development of the embryo, the course of the pregnancy, and even the body fat composition of the growing child.

Underweight also impairs boys' fertility. Underweight has been linked to an increased number of abnormal sperm. It is also suspected that underweight has a lowering effect on semen density.

Because male eating disorders manifest differently than female, discussion and awareness about boys' eating disorders and their manifestations should be increased. Also, about how they differ from girls' eating disorder symptoms. For example, boys' eating disorders could be highlighted in schools as a problem in a similar fashion as girls'.

**Jouni Tuomi, PhD, Principal Lecturer, Health Promotion**

**Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Kuntokatu 3, 33520 Tampere, Finland**