AGGIELIFE

eat or not to eat.

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es Up All Night

Eating disorders affect health, personality, images of female college students

BY BETH FOCHT The Battalion

n estimated 25 percent of all college-age woman have an eating disorder, and 50 percent of teenage girls are anorexic, according to the department of Student Health Education Services. Problems rangplunteers. Casing from overeating to binge eating and purging are all common disorders nd can lead to heart problems, osteoporosis, reproductive difficulties, deion, substance-abuse disorders and ultimately death.

C REACH & Her National Eating Disorders Awareness Week, Feb. 21 through 27, is will be Eating national effort to increase knowledge of these types of diseases in **In Tables in the first to stop their destructiveness.** This week is sponsored na-er from 4 pm. b ally interested in educating college students.

Eating disorders are illnesses associated with severe body image s A&M Women istortion and an obsession with weight.

People who suffer from anorexia nervosa starve themselves by drafields behind matically restricting their caloric intake. Sufferers have a morbid fear Practicesa: f being fat, and this fear leads to drastic dieting.

Another common eating disorder, bulimia nervosa, is characterized y short binge periods of eating an unusually large amount of food en purging by vomiting, using laxatives or compulsively exercising. ufferers generally feel ashamed and guilty because they can not cone will be an introl their eating habits.

promote the Dr. Jane Cohen, a nutrition specialist at the A.P. Beutel Heath Cenam from 103. r, said disorders are being seen at earlier ages.

"These disorders are showing up in younger girls, including cases l an 11-year-old being reported with these problems," Cohn said. s A&M TaekweWith girls having eating problems this young, it is not surprising that e held from 916 Dllege students, even on the Texas A&M campus, have such a high 183 lite of these types of disorders.

Cohen said problems may be related to several things including retionships, stress, school and issues of control.

"If a student continuously uses food to handle stresses, there might e a problem," she said. "You don't want to use food to compromise situation.

Cohen said people who are susceptible to developing a disorder hay start with a diet to help improve self-esteem or to change their



weight or body shape.

Sometimes, as a diet progresses, an individual may become more obsessed with weight loss and less able to eat normally," she said. "For those who develop an eating disorder, this can be the beginning of a downward spiral, which can have tragic medical and emotional consequences.

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In an effort to make Texas A&M students more aware of the existing problem, the Beutel Heath Center, along with Aggie Representative Educating About College Health (REACH), is sponsoring several activities on campus to help make students aware of problems.

Throughout the week, there will be eating disorder information tables in the Commons, Wehner, Kleberg and the Student Recreation Center to provide students with general information on diseases and how to detect eating disorders.

On Feb. 23, "Eating Disorders," a program presented by Aggie REACH, will discuss various issues about eating disorders in room 016 of Beutal Health Center.

On Feb. 24, at 8:30 p.m. in MSC 206, an eating disorder program, panel and video will be held featuring psychologist Dr. Mary Anne Moore, physician Dr. Ann Reed, dietitian Dr. Jane Cohen and a student recovering from an eating disorder. This discussion will be open for any type of information and questions on eating disorders.

Cohen said college students are aware of diseases but might not know what to look for if they feel someone they know might have a problem.

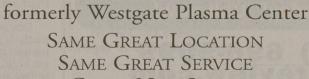
"Students with eating disorders are often terrified of gaining weight and continue to diet, or binge and purge even as their mental and phys-ical health deteriorate," she said. "Someone with a disorder might almost pass out while jogging; they might have a weak heartbeat and almost no blood pressure. These are just a few physical things to look for.

"Other things to look for might be the layering of clothes, the hiding of food and vomiting," Cohen said. "Generally students know when something is wrong with their friend down the hallway, and if students see these signs, it might be something to approach their friends about.

For more information on these disorders, contact the Beutal Heath Center's Health Education Center at 845-1341 or Aggie REACH at 847-9241.

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