

Gastrointestinal (GI) Symptoms in Eating Disorders

Disordered eating behaviors are strongly associated with altered gut sensitivity and gastrointestinal (GI) motility disturbance. This combined with psychiatric co-morbidities, like anxiety and food phobias, set the stage for persistent GI symptoms. Disordered eating and psychological distress may be the reason for a **98% prevalence rate** of functional bowel disorders among individuals with an eating disorder.

The chart below is designed to illustrate how an eating disorder may mimic a GI disorder and/or worsen symptoms of the condition. It also points out the significant impact of anxiety on the gut. This information is integral to avoid misdiagnosis and to ensure successful treatment.

	EATING DISORDER	ANXIETY	GASTROPARESIS	IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS)
Abdominal pain or discomfort	✘	✘	✘	✘
Bloating	✘	✘	✘	✘
Nausea	✘	✘	✘	✘
Early satiety (fullness)	✘	✘	✘	
Vomiting	✘	✘	✘	
Reflux	✘	✘	✘	
Diarrhea	✘	✘		✘
Gas	✘	✘		✘
Constipation	✘	✘		✘
Weight loss	✘		✘	
Malnutrition	✘		✘	

References

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