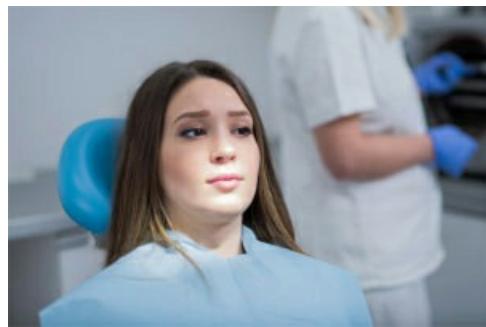


CAMP HILL, Pa. (Nov. 6, 2023) — Recent research points to a link between eating disorders, such as anorexia, bulimia and binge eating, and cyberbullying in teens. Dentists can be one of the first clinicians to detect early symptoms of these issues because they often show up in the mouth.

Cyberbullying has become a serious public health issue. A [recent study](#) from the International Journal of Eating Disorders showed that U.S. adolescents who participate in or are targets of cyberbullying are more likely to experience symptoms associated with eating disorders.

A [2018 study](#) from *Frontiers in Psychology* also revealed a connection between bullying and unhealthy eating behaviors for adolescent victims of cyberbullying that targeted their body appearance.



“From the pandemic to social media, teens today face increased stressors; but, not many people think about how dentists can help,” said Roosevelt Allen, DDS, MAGD, ABGD, chief dental officer, United Concordia Dental. “Eating disorders can affect the health of the mouth, causing bleeding of the gums, tooth decay, tooth erosion and gum disease — even changing the color, shape and length of the teeth. Regular visits to the dentist are important for catching and treating symptoms early.”

Other common oral signs of an eating disorder are tooth pain, tooth sensitivity, sores and dry mouth. Early dentist intervention, especially for those who have an increased risk of permanent damage to their tooth enamel due to bulimia, is crucial in maintaining teens’ oral health.

At-home care can also help reduce oral health symptoms caused by an eating disorder, including:

- Brushing and flossing daily.
- Rinsing with baking soda to help neutralize the effects of stomach acid after vomiting.
- Consulting with a dentist about specific treatment needs.
- Seeing the dentist regularly.

“If parents suspect their child may be worried about weight gain or show signs of an eating disorder, they should let their dental office know as dentists and dental hygienists are equipped to recognize the early warning signs,” said Allen.

Additional education and resources for those helping a loved one recover from an eating disorder can be found in the National Eating Disorders Association [Parent Toolkit](#). Resources for learning how to identify bullying and stand up to it safely are also available at [stopbullying.gov](#).

For more oral health tips, visit the Oral Health Resources section at [UnitedConcordia.com](#).

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