**Prevention:**

Eating Disorders are more responsive to treatment with early intervention. Untreated, eating disorders can be progressive and in extreme instances, life threatening. Therefore, it is important for those experiencing a pattern of disordered eating symptoms to seek specialized professional support through the Midshipmen Development Center as soon as possible.

**Appointments:**

You can make an appointment with a Registered Dietitian or Counselor by visiting the MDC website, http://intranet.usna.edu/MDC/. Click on “First Time Dietitian Appointments” or “First Time Counselor Appointments.” Fill out and submit the intake questionnaire and a Registered Dietitian or Counselor will provide you with an appointment.

**USNA Policy:**

USNA Policy, (COMDTMIDNINST 6100.1) is to “encourage midshipmen experiencing disordered eating symptoms to use available services to minimize the likelihood of progression of their symptoms so as to help them develop into fully prepared officers for the fleet. The medical diagnosis of an eating disorder shall not in and of itself, be cause for a recommendation for separation.”

**Recommended Resources:**

**Midshipmen Development Center Services Include:**

- Individual and group counseling
- Nutrition consultation
- Training and consultation to coaches, trainers, faculty, staff, detailers and other concerned Midshipmen

**Websites**

- http://intranet.usna.edu/MDC/
- http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/
- http://www.something-fishy.org/
- http://www.bulimiaguide.org/
- http://www.medainc.org/
- http://www.anad.org/
- http://www.femaleathletetriad.org/

“**If your lifestyle does not control your body, eventually your body will control your lifestyle...the choice is yours!”**

Ern Baxter, Author, I Almost Died.

Disordered Eating Behaviors

*The truth about food, weight and body image.*
Eating Disorders:
Eating disorders affect millions of females and males worldwide everyday. An intense focus on weight often leads to a negative body image and unhealthy eating behaviors. Sometimes, these behaviors lead to eating disorders that are serious and can have life threatening consequences.

Anorexia Nervosa: characterized by starvation and excessive weight loss.

Behaviors/Symptoms:
- Refusal to maintain weight at or above minimally normal weight for height, body type, age and activity level
- Intense fear of weight gain or being “fat”
- Feeling “fat” or overweight despite dramatic weight loss
- Distorted body image
- Loss of menstrual cycle
- Extreme concern with body weight & shape

Bulimia Nervosa: characterized by a secretive cycle of binging followed by purging.

Behaviors/Symptoms:
- Repeated episodes of binging and purging
- Feeling out of control during a binge and eating beyond the point of comfortable fullness
- Purging after a binge (vomiting, use of laxatives, diet pills and/or diuretics, excessive exercise, fasting)
- Frequent dieting
- Extreme concern with body weight & shape

Binge Eating Disorder: characterized by frequent episodes of solitary uncontrolled overeating. While there is no purging, binges are followed by feelings of shame, disgust or guilt.

Female Athlete Triad:
The female athlete triad includes disordered eating, osteoporosis, and loss of the menstrual cycle. Disordered eating often encompasses a conscious restriction of food and negative body image. The lack of energy intake from disordered eating increases the likelihood of an irregular menstrual cycle and stress fractures that create serious health risks and medical concerns. All athletes are at risk if they are pressured to meet unrealistic weight and body fat goals set forth by coaches, teammates, parents or the athlete herself.

Behavioral/Symptoms:
- Poor mental and physical performance
- Loss of muscle mass
- Fatigue, anemia, electrolyte imbalances
- Recurrent injuries and/or stress fractures

Medical Complications:
Many medical complications arise when disordered eating behaviors become eating disorders. The most common symptoms include:
- Impaired mental & physical performance
- Brittle nails and hair
- Dry and yellow skin
- Dental erosion
- Inability to tolerate cold
- Stress fractures/injuries
- Low bone density/weak bones
- Lightheadedness, dizziness, fatigue
- Irregular menstrual cycle
- Swelling of glands near cheeks
- Throat/stomach rupturing
- Sadness/depression

Tips to Help a Friend Struggling with Disordered Eating:
If you are worried about a friend, family member or teammate who may be struggling with disordered eating, it is important to express your concerns in a supportive way and consult with a medical professional.
1. Set a time to communicate your concerns
2. Ask him/her to address these concerns with a Registered Dietitian, Counselor or Doctor
3. Avoid conflicts or a battle of wills
4. Avoid giving simple solutions
5. Express your continued support