Research Shows the Pandemic Has Fueled a Surge in Eating Disorders

Doctors are seeing a surge in eating disorders across the country as people try to cope with the stress and anxiety induced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Jennifer Wildes, an associate psychiatry professor and director of outpatient eating disorders program at the University of Chicago Medicine says she's "absolutely seeing massive increases".

Patients are waiting four to five months for treatment when the wait for treatment prior to the pandemic was usually only a few weeks. Wildes' program is treating about 100 patients currently, nearly double from before the pandemic.

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Other programs are experiencing a similar problem. Jillian Lampert with The Emily Program has reported that her daily calls have nearly doubled since 2019.

> *The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness, which started offering virtual therapist-led support groups for adults during the pandemic, has also seen a surge. Since January more than 7,000 people from every state and 32 countries have attended their support groups, said alliance CEO Johanna Kandel.*
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> *Pandemic Has Fueled Eating Disorder Surge in Teens, Adults*

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Doctors are seeing an increase in cases across the board, meaning all races and ages. Eating disorders are more common among women than men. Stress and anxiety are common catalysts for eating disorders. Many people have experienced more stress and anxiety in the last year.