



**LYING IN
WEIGHT: The
Hidden Epi-
demic of Eating
Disorders in
Adult Women**
By Trisha Gura
(HarperCollins)

Bombarded by photos of skinny Nicole Richies and bony Kate Bosworths, confronted with reports of teenagers starving themselves to near-death, we tend to think of eating disorders, like anorexia nervosa and bulimia, as adolescent problems. We optimistically assume that most young women will eventually outgrow their disorders. But according to science writer Trisha Gura, the teenage years are just the beginning. In her well-researched first book, Gura paints a "picture of what eating disorders look like over a lifetime."

Gura cites disheartening studies that show eating disorders, like alcoholism, are often chronic illnesses that can be marked by long periods of "remission" followed by sudden relapses in response to a disruptive or stressful occurrence. She explains that women develop their disorder as a coping mechanism and experience difficulty weathering life's storms without it. Even when the outward symptoms (bingeing, purging, starving) aren't there, the psychological underpinnings of the disorder endure. These can influence the woman's emotional development, her choice of a mate (savior, father figure, unwitting accomplice), the way she feeds and cares for her children, and the way she feeds and cares for her own aging body. A life event like a wedding, pregnancy, or menopause can also trigger an eating disorder in women dealing with depression, anxiety, or other addictions.

Gura, herself a former anorexic, explores this issue with insight and empathy. Her book is a rallying cry to encourage women of all ages to face their own "hidden beasts" and get help with their life-threatening and misery-making eating disorders before it's too late. [CORRIE PIKUL]