

Letter to the Editor:

Amid the COVID-19 international pandemic another disease runs rampant: anorexia nervosa. Disguised as “fitspo”, “what I eat in a day”s, “forgetfulness”, “self-control”, “party-prep” and dieting advice; disordered eating is a glorified killer. With a mortality rate of 5.86%, Anorexia Nervosa takes more lives than any other psychiatric illness. Every 62 minutes someone dies as a direct result of an eating disorder, and without treatment 20% of those with an eating disorder will die. This has to be noticed. Has to be confronted. Has to end. It is time to be careful about what we consume on social media. To start noticing the unhealthy habits that have become normal and calling them what they are: disordered. But the question is “how?” How do we start recognizing the lies we have become accustomed to? How do we change our toxic social media feeds? The first step is education. There are plenty of resources provided by organizations both online and on social media. This includes: Project Heal, NEDA, National Eating Disorders, Eating Recovery Center, and many more. Take the time to learn the signs, behaviors and triggers. And if you realize that you or a loved one are struggling with disordered eating, know that it is never too early to ask for help. The next, and more long-term step is to actively change your social media feed and algorithm. Since algorithms are based on what you view, like, click on and search it is possible to cater and change what social media platforms decide to show you. If you start searching, following and liking accounts centered on body positivity, affirmations and real qualified health professionals rather than influencers and unqualified “health gurus” then you will slowly but surely start to see a positive change in your social media. Instead of being bombarded with before and afters, low-calorie tips, and crazy extreme diets promising to help you lose 10+ lbs in a week you will see encouragement, affirmations, real advice and overall positivity. We are what we consume, both physically and mentally. It is time to start noticing what we are consuming and the real ramifications it is having on our well being and health.