

Eating Disorders



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What is an Eating Disorder?

An eating disorder is not only a serious illness characterized by a preoccupation with food and weight, but also a complex emotional issue. A person with an eating disorder usually has low self-esteem and a persistent concern with body image. Contributing factors to eating disorders often include stress, anxiety, and/or unhappiness.

Types of Eating Disorders

Anorexia Nervosa

- Obsessive dieting, starvation, and sometimes self-induced vomiting
- Excessive use of laxatives, diuretics, and/or diet pills
- Abnormally sensitive about being fat; fear of becoming fat
- Obsessive exercising, calorie counting, fat gram counting

Bulimia Nervosa

- A compulsion to eat a large amount of food in a short time followed by self-induced vomiting to rid the body of the food
- A feeling of lacking control over his/her eating behaviors
- Regularly engaging in stringent diet plans and exercise
- Excessive use of laxative, diuretics, and/or diet pills

Early Warning Signs:

- Sudden, noticeable loss of weight
- Isolation from peers
- considerable time spent in exercise
- Unusual behavior around meal times
- Unusual dietary habits
- Complaints about being cold
- Demanding and irritable behavior especially around questions of weight and eating

Impact on Work/School:

- Absenteeism
- Impaired judgment
- Decline in performance/achievement
- Emotional instability

Eating Disorders Can Cause:

- Psychological Problems
 - Depression
 - Poor Self-esteem
 - Social Isolation
- Physical Problems
 - Emaciation/Malnutrition
 - Dehydration
 - Dizziness
 - Chronic Digestive Problems
 - Electrolyte Imbalance
 - Death

An eating disorder threatens your health, disrupts personal and family life, and restricts your freedom to grow. If you are concerned about your or someone else's relationship with food, please contact your family physician, or mental health professional.

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