

## Signs and Symptoms of Eating Disorders

### Anorexia Nervosa/Bulimia:

- Dramatic weight loss in a relatively short period of time.
- Wearing big or baggy clothes or dressing in layers to hide body shape and/or weight loss.
- Obsession with weight and complaining of weight problems (even if "average" weight or thin).
- Obsession with calories and fat content of foods.
- Obsession with continuous exercise.
- Frequent trips to the bathroom immediately following meals (sometimes accompanied with water running in the bathroom for a long period of time to hide the sound of vomiting).
- Visible food restriction and self-starvation.
- Visible bingeing and/or purging.
- Use or hiding use of diet pills, laxatives, ipecac syrup (can cause immediate death!) or enemas.
- Isolation. Fear of eating around and with others.
- Unusual Food rituals such as shifting the food around on the plate to look eaten; cutting food into tiny pieces; making sure the fork avoids contact with the lips (using teeth to scrap food off the fork or spoon); chewing food and spitting it out, but not swallowing; dropping food into napkin on lap to later throw away.
- Hiding food in strange places (closets, cabinets, suitcases, under the bed) to avoid eating (Anorexia) or to eat at a later time (Bulimia).
- Flushing uneaten food down the toilet (can cause sewage problems).
- Vague or secretive eating patterns.
- Keeping a "food diary" or lists that consists of food and/or behaviors (ie., purging, restricting, calories consumed, exercise, etc.)
- Pre-occupied thoughts of food, weight and cooking.
- Spending time on websites that promote unhealthy ways to lose weight
- Reading books about weight loss and eating disorders.
- Self-defeating statements after food consumption.
- Hair loss. Pale or "grey" appearance to the skin.
- Dizziness and headaches.
- Frequent soar throats and/or swollen glands.



- Low self-esteem. Feeling worthless. Often putting themselves down and complaining of being "too stupid" or "too fat" and saying they don't matter. Need for acceptance and approval from others.
- Complaints of often feeling cold.
- Low blood pressure.
- Loss of menstrual cycle.
- Constipation or incontinence.
- Bruised or calluses knuckles; bloodshot or bleeding in the eyes; light bruising under the eyes and on the cheeks.
- Perfectionistic personality.
- Loss of sexual desire or promiscuous relations.
- Mood swings. Depression. Fatigue.
- Insomnia. Poor sleeping habits

#### Binge Eating:

- Fear of not being able to control eating, and while eating, not being able to stop.
- Isolation. Fear of eating around and with others.
- Chronic dieting on a variety of popular diet plans.
- Holding the belief that life will be better if they can lose weight.
- Hiding food in strange places (closets, cabinets, suitcases, under the bed) to eat at a later time.
- Vague or secretive eating patterns.
- Self-defeating statements after food consumption.
- Blames failure in social and professional community on weight.
- Holding the belief that food is their only friend.
- Frequently out of breath after relatively light activities.
- Excessive sweating and shortness of breath.
- High blood pressure and/or cholesterol.
- Leg and joint pain.
- Weight gain.
- Decreased mobility due to weight gain.
- Loss of sexual desire or promiscuous relations.
- Mood swings. Depression. Fatigue.
- Insomnia. Poor Sleeping Habits.



## Orthorexia:

- Planning their daily menu more than 24 hours in advance
- Getting more pleasure from the perceived virtue of food than from actually eating it
- Decreased quality of life as the focus on “better” quality food increases
- Being increasingly rigid and self-critical about their eating
- Defining self-esteem and self worth by the quality of food they eat
- Having a lower opinion of people who do not eat what they deem healthy
- Describing healthy food as “pure,” “proper,” or “correct”
- Eating only at home where they have total control of the food, therefore withdrawing socially
- Feeling guilt or self-loathing when they eat “incorrect” food

