

Signs and Symptoms of Eating Disorders

ANOREXIA NERVOSA

Physiological

- Weight Loss-Often in a short period of time. At least 15% of original weight
- Cessation of menstruation
- Paleness
- Complaints of feeling cold / low body temperature
- Dizziness and fainting spells / low blood pressure
- Bone mineral loss, leading to osteoporosis
- Irregular heart beat which can lead to cardiac arrest
- Loss of muscle and body fat
- Hair Loss
- Dry skin

Behavioral

- Restricted eating, severe diets, fasting, "vegetarianism"
- Odd food rituals, food combinations
- Avoidance of social situations where food may be present
- Compulsive exercise
- Dressing in layers to hide weight loss, or keep warm
- Bingeing (may be secretive or infrequent)
- Distortion of body image (seeing self as fat even when emaciated)
- Intense Fear of becoming fat, regardless of low weight
- Use of laxatives, enemas, or diuretics
- Interest in cooking and feeding others

Attitude Shifts

- Mood shifts / depression / anxiety
- Perfectionistic attitude
- Insecurities about capabilities regardless of actual performance
- Self-worth is determined by food intake
- Social isolation

From Surviving an Eating Disorder. Siegel. M. et al (1988). Harper and Row and from American Anorexia Bulimia Association, Facts on Eating Disorders.

BULIMIA NERVOSA

Physiological

- Person may be under-, over-, or normal weight
- Swollen glands, puffiness in the cheeks, or broken vessels under the eyes
- Sore throat
- Fatigue and muscle ache
- Unexplained tooth decay

- Frequent weight fluctuations
- Electrolyte imbalance which can lead to irregular heartbeat, and in some cases, cardiac arrest.

Behavioral

- Secretive eating (missing food)
- Avoidance of restaurants, planned meals or social events if food is present
- Self-disgust when too much has been eaten
- Bathroom visits after meals
- The use of diet pills
- Rigid and harsh exercise regimes
- Fear of being fat, regardless of weight
- Bingeing that may alternate with fasting
- Preoccupation / constant talk about food or weight
- Vomiting and laxative use
- Shoplifting (sometimes food or laxatives)

Attitude Shifts

- Mood shifts including depression, sadness, guilt, and self-hate
- Severe self-criticism
- The need for approval
- Self-worth determined by weight
- Feeling out of control

-- From Surviving an Eating Disorder. Siegel. M. et al (1988). Harper and Row and from American Anorexia Bulimia Association, Facts on Eating Disorders.

BINGE EATING DISORDER

Physiological

- Weight-related hypertension or fatigue
- Weight gain
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease

Behavioral

- Bingeing
- Restriction of activities because of embarrassment about weight
- Going from one diet to the next
- Eating small amounts in public while maintaining a high weight

Attitude Shifts

- Feeling about self based on weight and control of eating
- Fantasizing about being thin
- Depression
- Guilt / shame

From *Surviving an Eating Disorder*. Siegel, M. et al (1988). Harper and Row and from American Anorexia Bulimia Association, *Facts on Eating Disorders*.