

Overeating & Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are a range of mental health problems that involve preoccupations with food, weight, and appearance to the degree that a person's health, relationships and daily activities are adversely affected.

Compulsive Overeating - characterized as an "addiction" to food. A person uses food and eating to deal with emotions, fill a void they feel inside, and to cope with daily stresses and problems. People with this problem tend to be overweight, are usually aware that their eating habits are abnormal, but find little comfort because of society's tendency to stereotype the overweight individual as being weak and lacking self-control.

Anorexia Nervosa – People with Anorexia starve themselves, avoid high-calorie foods, and exercise constantly. Anorexics are obsessed with being thin. They lose a lot of weight, are terrified of gaining weight, and believe they are fat even though they are very thin. Anorexia Nervosa, if left untreated, can be fatal.

Bulimia Nervosa – an illness where a person eats a large amount of food in a relatively short period of time and then uses behaviors such as self-induced vomiting, laxative abuse, excessive exercise or enemas to prevent weight gain. Thus producing a vicious cycle of bingeing and purging.

1 in 5 women struggle with an eating disorder or disordered eating

An estimated 10 – 15% of people with anorexia or bulimia are male

90% of those who have eating disorders are females between the ages of 12 -25

It is estimated that currently about 11% of high school students have been diagnosed with an eating disorder

Without treatment, up to 20% of people with eating disorders die

With treatment, that number falls to 2-3%

Signs/Symptoms of Eating Disorders

Anorexia – Thin appearance, fatigue, brittle nails, frequently being cold, dehydration, refusal to eat, skipping meals, denial of hunger, making excuses for not eating,

excessive exercise, preoccupation with food, rigid meal or eating rituals such as cutting food into tiny pieces.

Bulimia – Constant dieting, dehydration, fatigue, bloating, self-induced vomiting, laxative use, excessive exercise, going to bathroom after eating or during meals, hoarding food, eating to point of discomfort or pain.

Compulsive Overeating – eating much more food during a binge episode than during a normal meal, eating faster during binges, dieting without weight loss, frequently eating alone, hoarding food, hiding empty food containers, feeling depressed, disgusted or upset over the amount eaten.