

- Constipation
- Fatigue
- Lightheadedness
- Evidence of muscle wasting (cachectic appearance)
- Bone pain with exercise

**TABLE 16-3**

**Characteristics of Individuals With Eating Disorders**

Factors	Anorexia Nervosa	Bulimia
Food	Turns away from food to cope	Turns to food to cope
Personality	Introverted	Extroverted
	Avoids intimacy	Seeks intimacy
	Negates feminine role	Aspires to feminine role
Behavior	"Model" child	Often acts out
	Obsessive-compulsive	Impulsive
School	High achiever	Variable school performance
Control	Maintains rigid control	Loses control
Body image	Body image distortion	Less frequent body image distortion
Health	Denies illness	Recognizes illness
		Health fluctuates
Weight	Body weight <85% of expected norm	Within 2.3 to 7 kg (5 to 15 lbs.) of normal body weight or may be overweight
Sexuality	Usually not sexually active	Often sexually active

A complete history and physical examination are important to rule out other causes of weight loss. The medical assessment of an eating disorder focuses on the complications of altered nutritional status and purging. A careful history assesses weight changes, dietary patterns, and the frequency and severity of purging and excessive exercise. Purging behaviors include vomiting or other methods, such as abuse of laxatives, enemas, diuretics, anorexic drugs, caffeine, or other stimulants. Measure the patient's weight and height and evaluate it for appropriateness according to standard weight for height, age, and sex determined according to the percentile of his or her expected body weight or BMI.

Particularly important parts of the physical examination are vital sign measurement (heart and blood pressure, both supine and