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# Introduction



## What are eating disorders?

An eating disorder is marked by extremes.

It is present when a person experiences severe disturbances in eating behavior.

## Three main symptoms:

1. Abnormal eating (extreme restriction of food intake or recurrent episodes of extreme overeating)
2. Fear of gaining weight
3. Body shape distortion (dysmorphia)

# Eating Disorders



**Examples of eating disorders  
that might result in low weight:**

Anorexia Nervosa

Bulimia Nervosa

Binge Eating

Pica



# Eating Disorders



**Mainly affects young women and dieters.**

**Research shows:** More than **90 percent** of those who have eating disorders are **women** between the ages of **12 and 25 years**.

Many men are also affected.

# Eating Disorders

## Causes:

- It often starts with mild obesity; dieting leads to intentional weight loss
- The person continues to diet **and their body image becomes distorted**
- Many causes of eating disorders are related to societal pressure for thinness

## Treatment:

- Psychotherapy (psychological counseling)
- Medication
- Nutritional support for achieving & maintaining desirable body weight



# Eating Disorders



**Red flags for eating disorders include:**

- Menstrual irregularities
- Fertility problems
- Unexplained seizures
- Chronic fatigue
- Calluses on hands
- Loss of dental enamel

# Anorexia Nervosa

## Anorexia is also called self starvation:

- A person with anorexia nervosa will experience significant weight loss due to a combination of food restriction, starvation, and an intense fear of gaining weight.
- Anorexia nervosa usually develops **during adolescence** or early adulthood.
- Anorexia is an attempt to use food to deal with **emotional problems**.
- Due to the fear of gaining weight, people restrict the amount of food they consume.
- Lower food intake causes **metabolic and hormonal disorders**.



# Anorexia Nervosa



**It is characterized by:**

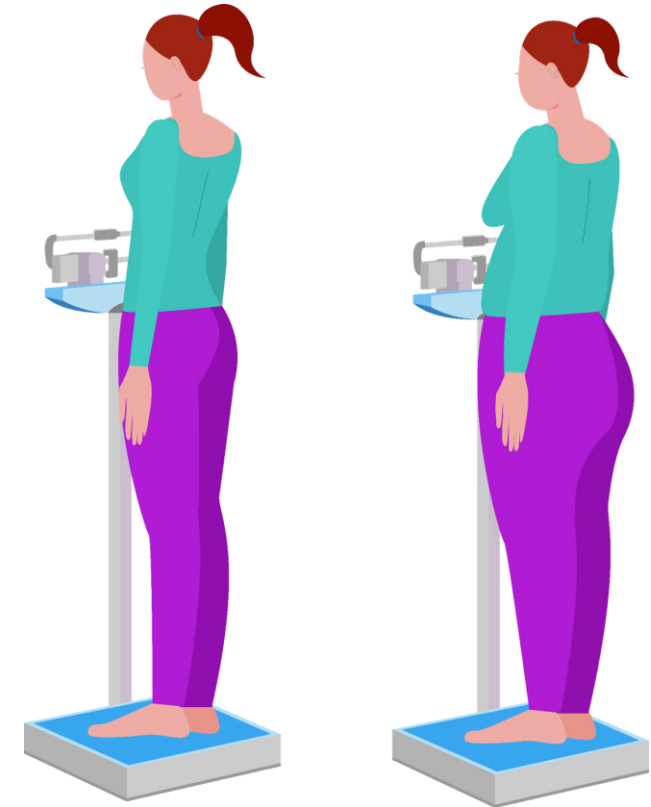
- Excessive and irrational food restriction
- Fear of becoming obese with a distorted body-image and a distorted body self-perception
- Starvation and food avoidance
- A BMI of 17.5 or less



# Anorexia Nervosa

## Symptoms:

- Severely malnourished and underweight
- Preoccupation with eating, food, body shape or weight
- Obsession with calories and fat content of food
- Difficulty concentrating
- Refusal to maintain a normal BMI for their age
- Intolerance to cold
- Hair loss or thinning
- Fatigue



# Bulimia Nervosa



**Characterized by episodes of binge eating and purging (vomiting, laxatives, fasting, medications and diuretics).**

**Binge eating:**

- Eating huge quantities of food in a short time
- Feeling of loss of control over eating

**Purging:**

- Compensation mechanism
- Repeatedly compensates for binging by purging (vomiting), taking laxatives, enemas, and/or dieting
- Extreme exercise to stay thin

# Complications

## Complications of Anorexia and Bulimia:

- Osteoporosis
- Anemia
- Menstrual irregularities
- Erosion of digestive tract and teeth and sore throat due to forced vomiting (among bulimic patients)
- Electrolyte imbalance
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Dry skin/hair
- Anxiety/Depression
- Slow heart rate
- Low blood pressure
- Death



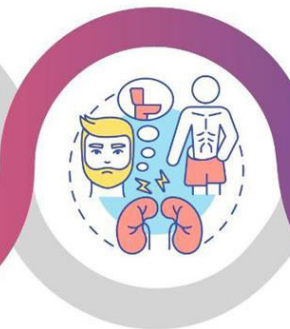
Loss of muscle



Anemia



Heart problems



Kidney problems



Gastrointestinal  
Problems

# Binge Eating



Binge eating begins during or after strict dieting.

A person eats a **large amount of food** in a **shorter period of time** than normal people.

The person also feels a sense of **loss of control**.

It may be caused by stress.

# Binge Eating

**Binge eating is characterized by recurrent eating without purging:**

- Eat rapidly
- Uncomfortably full
- Eating when not hungry
- Eating alone
- Feeling disgusted or guilty after binging
- Feelings of shame related to food or weight



# Pica



It is a pattern of **eating non-food materials** (such as dirt or paper) or craving for non-food items.

This pattern of eating should last **at least 1 month** to fit the diagnosis of pica.

## People with pica may eat:

Dirt, paint, clay, plaster, chalk, rocks, cigarettes, ashes, sand, starch, rust, hair, baking soda, glue, ice, etc.

# Pica

## Causes:

- It is observed more in young children than adults
- It can occur during pregnancy due to lack of certain nutrients
- Pica may also occur in adults who crave a certain texture in their mouth

## Complications:

- Malnutrition
- Intestinal obstruction and infection
- Anemia
- Mercury/lead poisoning
- Liver and kidney damage
- Constipation and abdominal problems



# Key Recommendations

Aim to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

Consume a balanced diet.

Avoid fad diets and “quick fix” solutions.

Avoid making negative or shaming comments about food and eating.

Avoid talking about weight at home. Focus instead on having a healthy lifestyle.





# Key Recommendations

## Maintain a positive body image.

Accept yourself as you are.

Focus on the things you like about yourself.

Maintain a healthy body by eating an appropriate amount of food and getting enough exercise.

Spend time with people who like you and appreciate you for yourself.

Show that you value yourself by taking good care of your body and mind.