

EATING DISORDERS

The signs and symptoms vary with the particular type of eating disorder.

ANOREXIA NERVOSA

When you have anorexia nervosa **you're obsessed with food and being thin**, sometimes to the point of deadly self-starvation. You may exercise excessively or simply not eat enough calories.

Anorexia symptoms may include:

- Thin appearance
- Fatigue
- Hair that thins, breaks or falls out
- Menstrual irregularities or loss of menstruation
- Constipation
- Dry skin
- Frequently being cold
- Low blood pressure
- Dehydration
- Bone loss



Emotional and behavioral symptoms of anorexia may include:

- Refusal to eat
- Denial of hunger
- Excessive exercise
- Flat mood or lack of emotion
- Difficulty concentrating
- Preoccupation with food

Red flags that family and friends may notice include:

- Skipping meals
- Making excuses for not eating
- Weighing food
- Cooking elaborate meals for others but refusing to eat them themselves
- Repeated weighing of themselves
- Frequent checking in the mirror for perceived flaws
- Complaining about being overweight

BULIMIA NERVOSA

During episodes of bulimia nervosa, you typically eat a large amount of food in a short amount of time and then try to rid yourself of the extra calories by vomiting or excessive exercise. You may be a normal weight or even a bit overweight.

Bulimia symptoms may include:

- Abnormal bowel functioning
- Damaged teeth and gums
- Sores in the throat and mouth
- Dehydration
- Fatigue
- Dry skin
- Menstrual irregularities or loss of menstruation

Emotional and behavioral symptoms of bulimia may include:

- Constant dieting
- Feeling that you can't control your eating behavior
- Eating until the point of discomfort or pain
- Self-induced vomiting
- Excessive exercise

- Unhealthy focus on body shape and weight
- Having a distorted, excessively negative body image
- Going to the bathroom after eating or during meals
- Depression or anxiety

RISK FACTORS

Certain situations and events might increase the risk of developing an eating disorder. These risk factors may include:

- **Gender.** Teenage girls and young women are more likely than teenage boys and young men to have eating disorders.
- **Age.** Although eating disorders can occur across a broad age range — from preadolescents to older adults — they are much more common during the teens and early 20s.
- **Family influences.** People who feel less secure in their families, whose parents and siblings may be overly critical, or whose families tease them about their appearance are at higher risk of eating disorders.
- **Emotional disorders.** People with depression, anxiety disorders and obsessive-compulsive disorder are more likely to have an eating disorder.



Eat healthy foods and only if you feel hungry