

Fast Facts

Anorexia Nervosa

- Eating disorder classified by an inaccurate perception of weight and strong fear of gaining weight despite not being overweight
- Try to control weight and shape by restricting the amount of food being consumed, exercising excessively, purposely vomit after eating or misusing laxatives, diet aids, diuretics or enemas
 - It isn't about the food, but about maintaining control
 - Equate being thin with self-worth
 - Hide thinness, eating habits or physical problems from others
 - Basically the same as starvation
 - Cause is unknown
- People at high risk include perfectionists, those with an increased emotional sensitivity, those who have high levels of perseverance, those with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) or those with high levels of anxiety
- Often associated with other mental health disorders, such as depression, mood disorders, personality disorders, alcohol/substance misuse and self-injury/suicidal thoughts/attempts
- More prevalent than ever before because of the importance our cultural places on being thin and associating this with success and self-worth
- Common among girls and women and becoming more commonplace in boys and men

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<p><i>Physical:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Extreme weight loss -Thin appearance -Abnormal blood counts -Fatigue -Insomnia -Dizziness/fainting -Bluish discoloration of the fingers -Hair that thins/breaks/falls out -Soft/downy hair covering the body -Constipation -Abdominal pain -Dry/yellowish skin -Intolerance of cold -Irregular heart rhythms -Low blood pressure -Dehydration -Swelling of arms/legs -Eroded teeth -Calluses on the knuckles (from induced vomiting) <p><i>Emotional/behavioral:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Severely restricting food intake through dieting or fasting, 	<p><i>Goal:</i> To get person back to and remain at a healthy weight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Involves multiple different healthcare personnel, like primary care doctor, mental health specialist, dietitian and family and friends -No medications to treat it -Talk to the doctor before taking vitamins and minerals -Stick to the plan, don't isolate yourself from your support system and resist looking in the mirror/weighing yourself frequently -Try yoga, meditation or massages to help manage anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Nothing specific you can do to prevent it -If you are having low self-esteem, odd dieting habits and aren't happy with their appearance, speak to a doctor because the key is to catch the disease early enough that it can be prevent from advancing

exercising excessively, bingeing and self-induced vomiting, use of laxatives/enemas/diet aids/herbal products

- Preoccupation with food
- Cooking elaborate meals for others but not eating them
- Frequently skipping meals or refusing to eat
- Denial of hunger
- Makes excuses for not eating
- Eating only a few certain "safe" foods (low in fat and calories)
- Adopting rigid meal or eating rituals (ex. spitting food out after chewing)
- Not wanting to eat in public
- Lying about how much food has been eaten
- Fear of gaining weight
- Repetitive weighing/measuring the body
- Frequent checking in the mirror for perceived flaws
- Complains about being fat or having parts of the body that are fat
- Covers up in layers of clothing
- Flat mood (lack of emotion)
- Social withdrawal
- Irritability
- Reduced interest in sex

©2019 Demystifying Your Health. All rights reserved.

Demystifying Your Health does not provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.