

Disordered Eating Warning Signs

Food

- Skipping meals
- Eating small portions
- Not eating with other people
- Eats in ritualistic ways/strange food habits
- Mixes strange food combinations
- Grocery shops and cooks for others, but will not eat
- Always has an excuse not to eat -- not hungry, just ate with a friend, feeling ill/upset, etc..
- Becomes "disgusted" with former favorite foods like red meat and desserts
- Will eat only a few "safe" foods
- Boasts about how "healthy" s/he eats
- Becomes a "vegetarian" but will not eat the necessary fats, oils, whole grains, and the denser fruits and veggies (such as sweet potatoes and avocados) required by true vegetarianism
- Chooses primarily low-fat items with low levels of needed nutrients, (lettuce, tomatoes, sprouts, etc.)
- Refuses to drink calories (no sodas, etc.)
- Drastically reduces or completely eliminates fat intake
- Reads food labels religiously
- May keep a stash of high-calorie binge food
- Going to the bathroom immediately after meals
- Excessive use of mouthwash and breath mints
- Sometimes the person uses supplements, laxatives, diet pills, water pills, or "natural" products from health food stores to promote weight loss
- May abuse alcohol or street drugs

Exercise behaviors

- Exercises excessively and compulsively
- May tire easily, keeping up a harsh regimen only through sheer will power
- Decline in athletic performance over time
- Insists on exercising even when sick or injured
- Being overly upset if they miss a workout
- Prioritizes exercise over spending time with friends, schoolwork, and other commitments

Appearance and body image behaviors

- Weight loss/gain
- Seems preoccupied with weight gain and obesity
- Wears baggy clothes, sometimes in layers, to hide fat or hide emaciation and stay warm
- Obsesses about clothing size
- Complains that s/he is fat even though others truthfully say this is not so
- Frequently inspects self in the mirror
- Talks about how they hate all or specific parts of the body
- Insists s/he cannot feel good about self unless s/he is thin, and is never thin enough to satisfy self

Thoughts

- Becomes irrational and denies that anything is wrong
- Argues with people who try to help, and then withdraws, sulks, or throws a tantrum
- Competitive
- Perfectionist: strives to be the best, the smallest, the thinnest, etc.
- Seems to have trouble concentrating
- Obsesses about food and weight
- Is envious of thin people
- May also self-injure

Feelings

- Has trouble talking about feelings, especially anger
- Becomes moody, irritable, cross, snappish, and touchy
- Avoids friends and activities
- Tries to please everyone and withdraws when this is not possible
- Tries to take care of others
- Will not prioritize care for self
- May present self as needy and dependent or conversely as fiercely independent and rejecting of all attempts to help
- Avoiding sexual activity
- Having casual/promiscuous sex
- Relationships tend to be either superficial or dependent

For additional information or to talk with someone, please blitz "EDPA".