

# EATING DISORDERS: WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS



When an eating disorder is detected early and the person is connected to treatment, the chances for recovery improve. Therefore, it is important to be aware of some of the eating disorder warning signs.

## EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL SIGNS

- Preoccupation with weight loss, food, calories, and dieting
- Refuses to eat certain foods, and often eliminates whole food groups (carbohydrates, fats, etc.)
- Makes excuses to avoid mealtimes or situations involving food
- Develops food rituals
  - (e.g., eating foods in certain orders, excessive chewing, rearranging food on a plate)
- Withdraws from friends and previously pleasurable activities and becomes more isolated and secretive
- Extreme concern with body size and shape
- Frequent checking in the mirror for perceived flaws in appearance
- Extreme mood swings

## PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Noticeable fluctuations in weight, both up and down
- Stomach cramps
- Menstrual irregularities
- Difficulties concentrating
- Abnormal laboratory findings
- Dizziness, especially upon standing
- Fainting/syncope
- Feeling cold all the time
- Sleep problems
- Cuts and calluses across the top of finger joints (a result of inducing vomiting)
- Dental problems
- Dry skin and hair, and brittle nails
- Fine hair on the body (lanugo)
- Muscle weakness
- Yellow skin (in the context of eating large amounts of carrots)
- Cold, mottled hands and feet or swelling of feet
- Poor wound healing
- Impaired immune functioning

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