

Are You at Risk for an Eating Disorder?

osing your appetite on occasion is normal—for example, you may have butterflies in your stomach before a big exam and not want to eat much. But having a serious eating disorder that results in a life-threatening weight loss is totally different: It is not normal, and you should seek out a health care professional who is experienced in working with people

who have eating disorders. The student health office should be able to direct you to appropriate care for this problem.

Review the following common symptoms of eating disorders, and ask yourself if you—or someone you know—needs professional help in dealing with eating problems.

Symptom	Anorexia	Bulimia	Binge eating
Excessive weight loss in a relatively short period of time	✓		
Continuation of dieting although bone thin	✓		
Dissatisfaction with appearance; belief that body is fat even though severely underweight	✓		
Loss of monthly menstrual periods	✓	✓	
Unusual interest in food and development of strange eating rituals	✓	✓	
Obsession with exercise	✓	✓	✓
Eating in secret	✓	✓	✓
Severe depression		✓	✓
Binging—consumption of large amounts of food			
Vomiting or use of drugs to stimulate vomiting, bowel movements, and urination		✓	
Binging but no noticeable weight gain		✓	
Disappearance into bathroom for long periods of time to induce vomiting		✓	
Abuse of alcohol or drugs			✓

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

Name _____ Date _____

EATING DISORDERS

1. What are the names of the two most common eating disorders?
 - 1.
 - 2.
2. Often times, individuals suffer from both diseases, but what are the differences between these two disorders?
3. When a female starves herself for long periods of time, she will stop having a menstrual cycle. Why do you suppose this happens?
4. Please list four physical characteristics of anorexia & four of bulimia.

ANOREXIA:	BULIMIA:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5. In what way is the media (TV, magazines, etc.) responsible for the large number of eating disorders in our country?
6. What would cause someone to begin a strange eating pattern?
7. Is an individual who has anorexia attractive? Please explain.
8. Are there other potential problems with eating disorders outside of merely being too skinny-looking?
9. What is the best advice to give someone that wants to lose weight?