

Holding belief that life will be better if you can lose weight
Believing that food is your only friend

Behavioural Signs:

Eating much more rapidly than usual
Eating until uncomfortably full
Eating large amounts of food when not physically hungry
Isolation: fear of eating around/with others
Chronic dieting on variety of popular diet plans
Hiding food in strange places to eat later
Self-defeating statements after eating
Blaming failure in social or professional community on weight

Effects:

Frequently out of breath after light activities
Excessive sweating and shortness of breath
High blood pressure &/or cholesterol
Leg and joint pain
Weight gain
Decreased mobility due to weight gain
Loss of sexual desire
Mood swings, depression, fatigue
Insomnia; poor sleeping habits

SEEKING TREATMENT

Before individuals can get better, they have to want to make a change in their life; nevertheless, it is extremely important for friends and family to give care, support, and necessary guidance.

If you have an eating disorder, a good first step would be to talk to a general

or you may be referred to a specialist. Treatment for any medical problems resulting from prolonged disordered eating may need to be addressed.

Community Resources

For information and support, contact:

The Avenue Community Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity
#201 - 320 21st Street W.
Saskatoon, SK S7M 4E6
tel: 306.665.1224 fax: 306.665.1380
www.avenuecommunitycentre.ca
info@avenuecommunitycentre.ca

Bridgepoint Centre for Eating Disorders
P.O. Box 190
Milden, SK S0L 2L0
tel: 306.935.2240 fax: 306.935.2241
bridgepoint@sk.sympatico.ca

Vicki Herman, M.Ed., Registered Psychologist
Student Counseling Services
University of Saskatchewan
Mental Health Outreach Coordinator
91 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, S7N 0W0
tel: 306.966.4920 fax: 306.966.7059

University of Saskatchewan Students' Union Pride Centre
Rm 104 Memorial Union Building, on campus.
tel: 306.966.6615 fax: 306.6978

Youth Resource Centre—Mental Health Resources
(must be under 18yrs of age)
311 - 20th St. E.
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0W8
tel: 306.655.4900



What Is An Eating Disorder?

Information & Resources



Food is essential for our health and development. It's not unusual to experiment with different eating habits; for example you may have decided to become a vegetarian or tried changing your diet to improve your health. However, some eating patterns can be damaging.

Problems with food can begin when it is used to cope with those times when you are bored, anxious, angry, lonely, ashamed or sad. Food becomes a problem when it is used to help you to cope with painful situations or feelings, or to relieve stress perhaps without you even realizing it.

Often people with eating disorders say that the eating disorder is the only way they feel they can stay in control of their life, but as time goes on it isn't really you who is in control it is the eating disorder.

ANOREXIA NERVOSA

Anorexia is characterized by low body weight and body image distortion. Individuals with anorexia attempt to control body weight through voluntary starvation, excessive exercising, purging, or drugs such as diet pills.

Psychological signs:

- Intense fear of weight gain
- Distorted perception of body shape/weight
- Denial of the existence of a problem
- Changes in personality/mood swings

Behavioural signs:

- Mood swings
- Restlessness/hyper-activity
- Wearing baggy clothes
- Vomiting/taking laxatives

Effects:

- Constipation/abdominal pain
- Dizzy spells and fainting
- Bloated stomach; puffy face and ankles
- Poor blood circulation and feeling cold
- Dry, rough, or discoloured skin
- Loss of menstrual "period"; loss of sex-drive
- Downy hair covering the body
- Loss of bone mass; osteoporosis

BULIMIA NERVOSA

Bulimia is characterized by recurrent episodes of binge-eating and purging through vomiting, inappropriately using laxatives, enemas, or other meds, excessive exercising, or fasting.

Psychological signs:

- Uncontrollable urges to eat vast amounts of food.
- Obsession with food; feeling "out of control" around food
- Distorted perception of body shape/weight
- Emotional behaviour/mood-swings
- Anxiety and depression; low self-esteem, shame, and guilt
- Isolation--feeling helpless and lonely

Behavioural Signs:

- Excessive exercise
- Secrecy and reluctance to socialize
- Shoplifting/spending large amounts of money on food
- Secretly hoarding food

Effects:

- Frequent weight changes
- Sore throat, tooth decay, & bad breath due to excessive vomiting
- Rounder face from swollen salivary glands
- Poor skin condition; hair loss
- Irregular "periods"; loss of sex-drive
- Lethargy and tiredness
- Increased risk of heart problems & problems with other internal organs (e.g. stomach rupture)

BINGE EATING/ COMPULSIVE OVER EATING

People suffering from compulsive eating have what is characterized as an "addiction" to food, where food is used to hide emotions, fill the void they feel inside, and cope with daily problems and stress in their lives. Most people with this disorder are over-weight and feel intense shame about this, so they use eating and food to cope with these feelings, which leads to a painful cycle. It is a serious disorder that requires professional support to ensure long-term recovery.

Psychological Signs:

- Feeling out of control around food
- Embarrassment at quantity of food being consumed
- Feeling ashamed, depressed, guilty after