

Eating Disorders: Warning Signs & Symptoms

The chance for recovery increases the earlier an eating disorder is detected. Therefore, it is important to be aware of some of the eating disorder warning signs.

EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL

- In general, behaviors and attitudes that indicate that weight loss, dieting, and control of food are becoming primary concerns
- Preoccupation with weight, food, calories, carbohydrates, fat grams, and dieting
- Refusal to eat certain foods
- Appears uncomfortable eating around others
- Food rituals
- Skipping meals or taking small portions of food at regular meals
- Any new practices with food or fad diets, including cutting out entire food groups
- Withdrawal from usual friends and activities
- Frequent dieting
- Extreme concern with body size and shape
- Frequent checking in the mirror for perceived flaws in appearance
- Extreme mood swings

PHYSICAL

- Noticeable fluctuations in weight, both up and down
- Stomach cramps, other non-specific gastrointestinal complaints
- 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
- Swelling around area of salivary glands
- Fine hair on body (lanugo)
- Cavities, or discoloration of teeth, from vomiting
- Muscle weakness
- Yellow skin (in context of eating large amounts of carrots)
- Cold, mottled hands and feet or swelling of feet
- Poor wound healing
- Impaired immune functioning