

Signs of an Eating Disorder

Remuda Ranch, a leading eating disorder treatment center, suggests the following signs that someone may have an eating disorder, especially when these behaviors have begun recently and several occur together:

- Weight loss: extreme thinness or loss of 15 or more lbs in 2-3 months, is exhilarated by weight loss
- Intense fear of being overweight: preoccupied with thinness, wants to be thinner than peers, complains of being overweight when not, obsessed with clothing size, scales, and mirrors
- Preoccupation with dieting & food: uses diet products, talks constantly about food, calories, fat grams, reads a lot about nutrition, dieting, and exercise
- Eating little: skips meals, eats very little, is finicky about food, appears to eat when not- e.g., pushes food around on a plate but mostly does not eat it
- Unusual eating habits: eats one thing at a time, eats the same thing every day, cuts food into tiny pieces, fears touching certain foods, sudden vegetarianism, refuses to eat with others
- Bathroom breaks: disappears into the bathroom during or after meals-may suggest vomiting to purge calories
- Taking up smoking: especially for someone who would not be expected to smoke
- Caffeine use: excessive drinking of diet caffeinated beverages or regular coffee without sugar
- Evidence of binge-eating: A lot of empty food packages may suggest bingeing
- Empty laxative packages: herbal or otherwise, may suggest purging
- Onset of hyperactivity: constantly fidgets, lots of exercise
- Loss of menstrual period: irregular, minimal, or absent menses
- Intolerance of cold: shivering, blue skin or fingers
- Baggy or full-covering clothes: wears baggy clothes or long sleeves, pants, and coats during summer months-used to hide excessive thinness, may indicate body image problems
- Skin & hair problems: pasty-looking skin, very thin and dry hair, hair loss, and fine hair growth on the face and arms like a baby-all indicate malnourishment
- Swollen salivary glands: distended, "chipmunk cheeks"
- Broken blood vessels in the eyes
- Change in mood: anxiety, depression, irritability, increased obsessions and compulsions
- Social withdrawal: isolates from peers and family; unwilling to eat with other people
- Perfectionism & low self-esteem: expects too much of self and sees self as not good enough

Source: www.remudaranch.com