

## A Self-Evaluation Test

- Do you frequently think about losing weight?
- Have you ever vomited, used laxatives or diuretics to lose weight?
- Have you ever exercised excessively or faster to lose weight?
- Do your friends or family express concern about your eating habits or weight?
- Do you avoid eating with others?
- Do you feel guilty after you've eaten?
- Do you feel out of control around food?
- Have you lost or gained 10-15 pounds over a short period of time?
- Do you feel like you have to hide the "real" you?
- Do you frequently overeat when you are stressed or overwhelmed?
- Are you frequently upset about the way you look?
- Did you answer "yes" to three or more of the above?

If your answer to the last question was "YES", you may have an eating disorder.

**PLEASE SEEK HELP!**

## Who Can I Talk To?

If you or a friend are concerned about having an eating disorder, talk to a person you trust such as a family member, teacher, counselor, or therapist. You can also call **Teen Line**<sup>®</sup>.

We are open every evening between 6-10pm PST and our teens are waiting to listen to you. They have been trained in ways to help and support other teenagers. They will understand how you're feeling, and help you figure out what to do next. It's free, so just call **800-TLC-TEEN (852-8336)** or **(310) 855-HOPE (855-4673)**. You can call toll-free from any phone (except cell phones). After hours, your call will be directed to **Didi Hirsch's Suicide Prevention Center** or visit our website at: **www.teenlineonline.org** for more information.

A free downloadable version of this and other brochures are available at **www.teenlineonline.org**

**teen line**<sup>®</sup>

teens helping teens



CEDARS-SINAI<sup>®</sup>



Accredited by the American Association of Suicidology

**teen line**<sup>®</sup>

## Eating Disorders

USA & Canada

**800-TLC-TEEN**  
(852-8336)

6:00 PM-10:00 PM, PST

Text "TEEN" to 839863

6:00pm-9:00pm PST

**www.teenlineonline.org**



# Eating Disorders

## What Are Eating Disorders?

Each year, thousands of teens develop eating disorders. The most commonly known eating disorders are **Anorexia Nervosa** and **Bulimia Nervosa**. You can have one or both. **Compulsive Overeating** is typically binge eating to fill an emotional need.

### Anorexia

*"My weight dropped from 87 to 76. Every time I try to eat, I can't. I'm starving myself and it's only making me sick."*

Anorexia is characterized by self-starvation and distorted body image. It is an obsessive pursuit of thinness. For fear of getting fat, hunger is repressed. Many anorexics also engage in compulsive exercise to burn calories. Anorexia can lead to severe medical complications such as kidney failure, malnourishment, organ damage, cardiac arrest and death.

### Bulimia

*"I think I am suffering from Bulimia. I have been like this for two years. My parents don't know what's wrong with me."*

Bulimics fear a loss of control over their eating. There's an overwhelming impulse to binge, but fear of becoming fat is so overpowering that purging, usually through vomiting or overuse of laxatives, becomes necessary. Those who vomit may severely damage the esophagus and erode enamel on their teeth. Plus, extreme potassium depletion can lead to cardiac arrest.

## What Causes Eating Disorders?

*"My father told me I am too fat and need to lose weight. If he can't see beyond the fat, then how can other people?"*

There isn't an easy answer. Psychological issues, particularly perfectionist personality traits, and learned behavior all contribute. Also, some may have a biochemical imbalance that makes them prone to these disorders. Our culture encourages people to base self-worth on body weight and shape – if you aren't as thin as a fashion model or as muscular as a fitness fanatic, you may see yourself as a less valuable person.

## Treatment

Includes psychological and medical evaluations, nutritional assessments, psychotherapy including self-esteem therapy and assertiveness training. Some teens may require an inpatient program.

*"How do you know if you have an eating disorder? I am constantly preoccupied with my body and even though I've lost weight, I'm still not satisfied."*



## Binge Eating Disorder (Compulsive Eating)

*"I can't stop it. It's not like eating too much at Thanksgiving. It's eating too much everyday. I hide my wrappers and receipts because I don't want anyone to know"*

Binge eating disorder is when you eat unusually large amounts of food without purging. Most binge eaters feel unable to stop eating on a regular basis. They feel incredibly embarrassed about overeating and promise themselves they'll stop, but they are usually unable to do so without help. Binge eating can lead to low self esteem, problems in daily functioning, social isolation, obesity, and diseases related to obesity such as diabetes.

