

WARNING SIGNS OF DISORDERED EATING

The following are red flags that indicate an individual may need help:

Changes in regular eating habits

- Portion sizes have become increasingly smaller or larger.
- Avoids certain foods or entire categories of foods (e.g., carbohydrates).
- Excessive intake of low-fat or “health” foods (e.g., protein shakes, energy bars).
- Constantly goes on diets and/or makes excuses for not eating.
- Diet contains an excessive amount of gum, coffee and/or diet soft drinks.
- Evidence of food wrappers or packaging hidden around the house or in the garbage.
- Food constantly missing from the household.
- Frequent and/or long visits to the bathroom, especially after eating.
- Obsesses over what others eat and wants to cook for, bake for and feed others.

Rituals with food or exercise

- Cuts food into precise pieces.
- Eats extremely slowly or pushes food around on plate to create the illusion of eating.
- Counts calories obsessively and constantly reads nutrition labels.
- Exercises excessively in spite of injury, illness or poor weather.

Withdrawal

- Avoids eating meals with others.
- Has withdrawn from friends and regular activities in order to spend more time with the eating disorder.

Physical changes

- Weight gain or loss.
- Bloodshot eyes, swollen salivary glands, calluses or scars on the back of hand (from vomiting).
- Increased cavities, discoloration of the teeth.
- Complains of feeling cold, poor circulation.
- Hair loss, growth of lanugo.
- Seems tired and lacks vitality.

Body Checking

- Obsessively weighs self
- Spends excessive amounts of time in front of a mirror.