

TWU Counseling Center

A Short List of Salient Warning Signs For Eating Disorders

1. Preoccupation with weight, food, calories, and dieting, to the extent that it consistently intrudes on conversations and interferes with other activities.
2. Excessive, rigid, exercise regimen – despite weather, fatigue, illness, or injury.
3. Withdrawal from, or avoidance of, numerous activities because of weight and shape concerns.
4. Expressions of anxiety about being fat which do not diminish when weight is lost.
5. Evidence of self-induced (often secretive) vomiting, such as:
 - Bathroom smells or messes
 - Rushing to the bathroom immediately after a meal and returning with bloodshot eyes
 - Swelling of the submandibular glands yields to a “chipmunk” look around the jaw
6. Evidence (e.g., wrappers, advertisements, coupons) of use of laxatives, diuretics, purgatives, enemas, or emetics.
7. Evidence of binge-eating including hoarding and/or stealing food, or consumption of huge amounts of food inconsistent with the person’s weight.
8. Alternating periods of severely restrictive dieting and overeating; these phasic fluctuations may be accompanied by dramatic weight fluctuation of 10 pounds or more.
9. Inexplicable problems with menstruation and/or fertility.
10. Extreme concern about appearance as a defining feature of self-esteem, often accompanied by dichotomous, perfectionist thinking (e.g., either I am “thin and good” or “gross and bad”)
11. Paleness and complaints of lightheadedness, weakness, fatigue or disequilibrium not accounted for by other medical problems.

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