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# Anorexia Nervosa: Types, Reasons And Solutions

## Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to educate people about mental issues and its symptoms and specifically about eating disorders because it is usually not considered an actual eating disorder, and to educate people about the effects it leaves on the body, physically and mentally.

## Definition

Anorexia Nervosa is a psychological and potentially life-threatening eating disorder. It is characterized by the inability to maintain a minimally normal weight gain, and a devastating fear of gaining weight. Women and men who suffer from this eating disorder exemplify a fixation with a thin figure and abnormal eating patterns. Anorexia nervosa is interchangeable with the term anorexia, which refers to self-starvation and lack of appetite. Those suffering from this eating disorder are typically suffering from an extremely low body weight relative to their height and body type. Anorexia is a form of self-starvation that affects the human body physically and mentally, and it is a way of killing one's self slowly and painfully.

## Types of Anorexia

To prevent weight gain or to continue losing weight, people with anorexia usually severely restrict the amount of food they eat. They may control calorie intake by vomiting after eating or by misusing laxatives, diet aids, diuretics or enemas. They may also try to lose weight by exercising excessively. No matter how much weight is lost, the person continues to fear weight gain. There are two common types of anorexia, which are Binge/purge type and Restrictive. Binge/purge type, the person struggling with this type of eating disorder will often purge after eating. This alleviates the fear of gaining weight and offsets some of the guilt of having ingested forbidden, or highly restricted food. Restrictive type, people suffering restrictive anorexia is often perceived as highly self-disciplined. They restrict the quantity of food, calories and often high fats or high sugar foods. They consume far fewer calories than are needed to maintain a healthy weight.

## Causes of Anorexia

Anorexia can affect people of all ages, genders, races, and ethnicities. Although the disorder most frequently begins during adolescence, an increasing number of children and older adults are also being diagnosed with anorexia. Eating disorders like anorexia are more common in females than in males. The risk of developing an eating disorder is greater in actors, models, dancers, and athletes in sports where appearance and weight are important. Anorexia is a bio-psycho-social illness, meaning that biological, psychological and social cultural aspects contribute to the development of the illness. This means that anorexia-or any eating disorder, for that matter- is not a choice. There are clear causes of anorexia that individuals need to be aware of.

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Genetics: From a biological standpoint, eating disorders are familial illnesses with significant genetic components. Research has found that you have a greater chance of developing an eating disorder if a relative of yours has one as well.

Psychological indicators: From a psychological standpoint, eating disorder sufferers tend to share thoughts, feelings, and views of the world that support the development of anorexia symptoms. They tend to be perfectionistic and high achieving, which propels their obsessive behaviors to be the “best dieter”, and not just thinner but the “thinnest”. People with anorexia will often present a “healthy” version of themselves to keep friends and loved ones happy and avoid difficult conversations about weight, eating, and exercise concerns. Sadly, sufferers struggle to see the “big picture” not understanding how their restriction, exercise and rituals around food and eating are affecting their health and relationships.

Social cultural pressures: It's very common for a person suffering from anorexia to believe thoughts like “I have to exercise every day or I'll be fat” or “If I eat this cookie I will see it on my thighs”. Unfortunately, many of today's cultures encourage thinness as the standard for beauty and success; “fat” bodies are stigmatized.

## Signs and Symptoms of Anorexia

Physical signs and symptoms of anorexia nervosa are linked to those of famine, but this also includes emotional and behavioral problems associated with an unrealistic perception of body weight and extreme fear of gaining weight.

Physical symptoms:

- Rapid weight loss over several weeks or months.
- Continuing to diet even when thin or when weight is very low.
- Having an unusual interest in food, calories, and nutrition.
- Intense fear of gaining weight.
- Strange eating habits or routines, such as eating in secret.
- Feeling fat, even if underweight.
- Depression or anxiety.
- Infrequent or irregular, or even missed menstrual periods in females.
- Wearing loose clothing to hide weight loss.
- Compulsive exercising.
- Social withdrawal.

Physical symptoms that develop over time, including; low tolerance of cold weather, brittle hair and nails, dry or yellowing skin, anemia, constipation, swollen joints, tooth decay, and new growth of thin hair over the body.

Emotional symptoms:

- Refuse to eat.
- They deny the feeling of hunger.
- Lying about the amount of food eaten.
- Social isolation.

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- Thinking of suicide.

## Treatment

Treatment for anorexia is challenging because most people with the disorder deny that they have a problem, or are so terrified of becoming overweight that they may refuse efforts to help them gain a normal weight. Like all eating disorders, anorexia requires a comprehensive treatment plan that is adjusted to meet the needs of each patient. Treatment usually involves a combination of talking therapy and supervised weight gain. It's important to start treatment as early as possible to reduce the risk of serious complications, particularly if you've already lost a lot of weight. Treatment for anorexia is slightly different for adults and those under 18 years old.

Goals of treatment include restoring the person to a healthy weight, treating emotional issues, correcting distorted thinking patterns, and developing long-term behavioral changes. Treatment most often involves a combination of the following treatment methods. Psychotherapy, this is a type of individual counseling that focuses on changing the thinking and behavior of a person with an eating disorder. Medication, certain antidepressant medications such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors might be used to help control anxiety and depression associated with an eating disorder. Some antidepressants may also help with sleep and stimulate appetite. Nutrition counseling, this strategy is designed to teach a healthy approach to food and weight, to help restore normal eating patterns, and to teach the importance of nutrition and following a balanced diet. Group and/or family therapy, family support is very important to treatment success. It is important that family members understand the eating disorder and recognize its signs and symptoms. People with eating disorders might benefit from group therapy, where they can find support from people who shared similar experiences. Hospitalization, hospitalization might be needed to treat severe weight loss that has resulted in malnutrition and other serious mental or physical health complications, such as heart disorders, serious depression and risk of suicide. In some cases the patient may need to be fed through a feeding tube or through an IV.

Untreated anorexia nervosa can lead to: Damaged organs, especially the heart, brain and kidneys. Drop in blood pressure, pulse, and breathing rates, Loss of hair, irregular heartbeat, thinning in bones.

## Conclusion

This disorder has been occurring for a long time but according to my research, it wasn't really viewed as a disorder until the 1900's. Not until the 1930's was it recognized as a mental/emotional disorder. Studies have shown that there is not a lot of sympathy for anorexia nervosa sufferers. Treatment is always determinant by how much the person wants to help themselves, and if they are in denial or not. When you have an eating disorder, you are playing with fire, gambling with your life and treading the thin line between the living and the dead, there is nothing beautiful, glamorous or enviable about it. This illness is evil, manipulative & cruel. It will cause you to destroy yourself without realizing it, stripping you of every part of your being until you are an empty shell of what once was. However, a bright future is possible if the person is willing to open up and accept that they have a problem and want to get better and change the way they think. Accepting the hard road to recovery and willingness to go through that to be a happy and healthy person is the most important thing and one of the main steps. They should believe that they are not worth less and that they deserve to live a happy and healthy life, and

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that they don't deserve to die because of that awful illness.

## References

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