

Medical consequences

There are many medical risks associated with anorexia nervosa. They include:

- Shrunken bones
- Mineral loss
- Low body temperature
- Irregular heartbeat
- Permanent failure of normal growth
- Development of osteoporosis and bulimia

Continued use of laxatives is harmful to the body. It wears out the bowel muscle and causes it to decrease in function. Some laxatives contain harsh substances that may be reabsorbed into your system.

Anorexia and Pregnancy

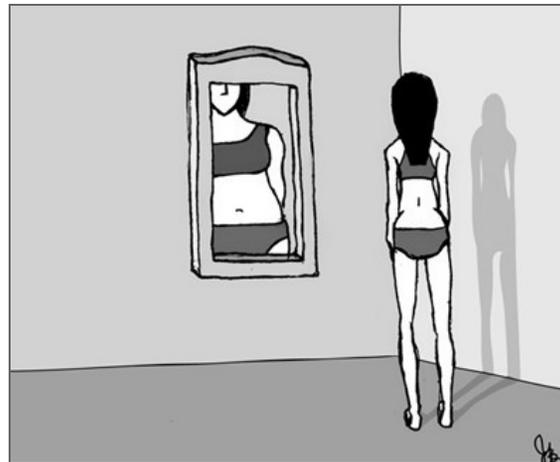
In order to have a healthy child, the average pregnant woman should gain between 25 and 30 pounds. Telling this to a person who is anorexic is like telling a normal person to gain 100 pounds. If you are anorexic it may be hard to conceive a baby and carry to term. Irregular menstrual cycles and weak bones may make it even harder to conceive. Women with eating disorders have higher rates of miscarriages and your baby may be born prematurely which puts them at risk for medical problems.

All pregnant women should receive proper prenatal care. For anorexic woman, they need special care. You should always take your prenatal vitamins. You should not exercise unless your doctor says it's okay.

Is There a Connection Between Alcohol Use Problems and Anorexia?

Yes, often. Alcohol use problems may produce anorexia at three time points:

- **During intoxication.** Thought and coordination are disorganized when the person is inebriated, making eating a low priority.
- **During recovery from intoxication.** Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may all contribute to anorexia.
- **Secondary to organ damage.** Damage to organs from long-term alcohol abuse may also cause anorexia.



Anorexia



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What is Anorexia?

Anorexia Nervosa, also known as simply anorexia, is an eating disorder where people starve themselves. Anorexia usually begins in young people around the onset of puberty. People suffering from anorexia are very skinny but are convinced that they are overweight. Weight loss is obtained in many ways. Anorexics have an intense fear of becoming fat. Their dieting habits develop this fear. Anorexia mainly affects adolescent girls. People with anorexia continue to think overweight even when they get extremely skinny, are very ill or near death. Often they will develop strange eating habits such as refusing to eat in front of other people. The disorder is thought to be most common among people of high socioeconomic classes and people involved in activities where thinness is especially looked upon (example: dancing, theater, long distance running). Thinness is achieved by exercising, taking laxatives and not eating.

Symptoms of Anorexia

There are many symptoms for anorexia. Although some individuals won't experience all of them. Some symptoms are:

- Body weight that is inconsistent with age, build and height (usually 15% below normal weight)
- Not wanting or refusing to eat in public
- Anxiety
- Weakness
- Brittle skin
- Shortness of breath
- Obsessiveness about calorie intake
- Loss of at least 3 consecutive menstrual periods (in women)

Behaviors Associated with Anorexia

- Dietary restriction; eating less calories, only "safe" food, no fat
- Hoarding, concealing, picking at, crumbling or throwing away food
- Engaging in compulsive or ritualistic behavior such as cutting food into smaller pieces, rearranging food
- Preoccupation with food (reading recipes, preparing food only for others)
- Wearing baggy or layered clothing to conceal weight loss or to keep warm
- Social withdrawal, secretiveness
- Compulsive activity, stands instead of sitting, stairs instead of the escalator
- Behaviors associated with anxiety if a person has to handle certain foods (measuring, weighing foods)

Physical Consequences of Weight Loss

- Difficulty concentrating, thinking clearly
- Sensitivity to cold
- Lowered blood pressure which may result in fainting, dizziness, passing out
- General weakness
- Shrinking of muscles and other organs such as the brain
- Thinning of hair or hair loss
- Dehydration that may result in constipation and dry cracked skin

- Osteoporosis
- Heart failure, death
- Pale skin tone
- Develop downy hair on face and skin

Treatment for Anorexia

Treatment should be individualized and may include:

- Hospital inpatient programs
- Outpatient day programs
- Medication to treat an associated mood disorder
- Individual or group psychotherapy

Therapists used different approaches and some of the more common ways to treat anorexia nervosa are:

- Behavior therapy
- Cognitive-behavior therapy
- Family therapy
- Psychodynamic
- Expressive art therapy

Facts

- The female-male ratio of full or partial anorexia nervosa was 2:1
- Common characteristics of a person with anorexia are: a tendency toward perfectionism, high achiever, and difficulty adapting to change
- Anorexia is more prevalent among females (90% of people with this disease are women)
- 15% of people who develop anorexia die either directly or non-directly from a heart failure.