

Deadly Dieting

[Ephesians 3:17-19 HCSB](#) and that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith. *I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, (18) may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love, (19) and to know the Messiah's love that surpasses knowledge, so you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

There are two types of eating disorders with which America has far too much familiarity. They are anorexia and bulimia. Anorexics starve themselves. Bulimics cycle between binge eating and purging. Whether the person is anorexic or bulimic matters little because the issue is not really about food. What they're really starving for is unconditional love and acceptance but for one reason or another, they simply cannot believe that they deserve it; that no one – even God Himself – would extend that to them. They have not yet come to realize the full length, width, height, and depth of God's love. That kind of love surpasses human knowledge, even for the least damaged of sinners among us. For these poor compulsive folk, the requisite faith is very difficult to achieve.

Accompanying problems

It's not just about whether they eat or not. This type of compulsive behavior is accompanied by a whole range of issues.

1. Confusion: They cannot maintain a proper, balanced view of brains and beauty, intelligence and thinness, achievement and appearance.
2. Deception: They steal food or laxatives. They lie about eating. They'll pretend to swallow, only to spit it out later.
3. Depression: They feel fat even though they may look skeletal. It gets so bad that when they look in the mirror they actually see a fat person, even though their loved ones see a walking skeleton.
4. Compulsion: They are constantly driven for some measure of self-control. They'll say "Eating is the only part of my life that I actually CAN control."
5. Loneliness: Their condition isolates them from others in three tragic ways: first their terrible appearance drives others away; second their deception isolates them from others; and third their confused, compulsive thinking so frustrates others that they walk away.
6. Low self-worth: No matter what anyone says to them, regardless of any proof brought to bear, they will insist that they are "fat pigs", a "bad person" and even go so far as to say "I don't deserve to live."
7. People pleasing: They are convinced that if they could just perform a little better, be a little thinner, or have a little more self-control, someone somewhere might love them.
8. Perfectionism: They feel that they must have bodies as perfect as what they see in magazines, on TV, or in the movies. They feel that they are not allowed any errors in performance. In fact, they are not even allowed to not overachieve!

Warning signs:

Ranging from some of the most first to some of the later, more extreme signs you'll see:

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| 1. Weight swings or drops | 5. Bowel dysfunction |
| 2. Digestive problems | 6. Glandular problems |
| 3. Hypoglycemia | 7. Hair loss |
| 4. Dental problems | 8. Menstrual problems |

- 9. Blood cell abnormalities
- 10. Bone problems
- 11. Heart problems
- 12. Mental difficulties

- 13. Musculoskeletal problems
- 14. Vision problems
- 15. Kidney failure

Emotional Causes:

Anorexics and Bulimics feel:

1. Worthless: This could come from abuse at home, whether it takes the form of verbal abuse, emotional starvation, physical abuse, sexual abuse, alcoholism or drug abuse.
2. Inadequate: This might come from the unrealistic expectations of others, perfectionist parents, acceptance based on performance, or conditional love.
3. Driven: They often live in a high-performance atmosphere like models, ballerinas, dancers, actors, or athletes (especially wrestlers and gymnasts).
4. Hopeless: They sometimes struggle with depression after an event like an abortion and this triggers the compulsion. Sometimes it's a denial of some difficult reality. Or it sometimes starts in the midst of a deep, clinical depression.
5. Powerless: Sometimes they see obesity in one or both parents and decide to never let that happen to them. Perhaps the struggle against a propensity for weight gain is taken too far. Sometimes it is a form of rebelliousness against over-controlling parents; a way to gain power in one small area of their life.

But what truly is the...

Root cause:

Both anorexics and bulimics obsess about thinness. Bulimics do not love food and Anorexics don't enjoy starvation. They don't feel about food any differently than the fascination/hatred a drug addict has for his drug of choice.

Just like any other addict, they use food (or the lack thereof) to numb their feelings and to escape reality through some personal fantasy.

They believe that the only way they can be loved is to be the right size and the only way they can achieve that is through super control over their body's craving for food.

- **Proverbs 14:12 HCSB** There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.
- **Colossians 2:23 HCSB** Although these have a reputation of wisdom by promoting ascetic practices, humility, and severe treatment of the body, they are not of any value against fleshly indulgence.

Derashot:

1. Agree to get checked by a doctor. (Proverbs 27:12)
 - **Proverbs 27:12 HCSB** The sensible see danger and take cover; the foolish keep going and are punished.
2. Attend weekly sessions with a knowledgeable, wise counselor. (Proverbs 23:12)
 - **Proverbs 23:12 HCSB** Apply yourself to instruction and listen to words of knowledge.
3. Acquire as much knowledge about the problem as possible. (Proverbs 24:13-14)
 - **Proverbs 24:13-14 HCSB** Eat honey, my son, for it is good, and the honeycomb is sweet to your palate; (14) realize that wisdom is the same for you. If you find it, you will have a future, and your hope will never fade.

4. Admit your inability to control the eating pattern. (James 5:16)
 - **James 5:16 HCSB** Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The intense prayer of the righteous is very powerful.

5. Abandon the idea that you just need more willpower. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5; 12:9-10)
 - **2 Corinthians 10:4-5 HCSB** since the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments (5) and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.
 - **2 Corinthians 12:9-10 HCSB** But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. (10) So because of Christ, I am pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in catastrophes, in persecutions, and in pressures. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

6. Allow yourself to forgive those who have hurt you and to forgive yourself. (Colossians 3:13)
 - **Colossians 3:13 HCSB** accepting one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so also you must *forgive*.

7. Act in total faith on God's power to rescue you. (Psalm 71:1-3)
 - **Psalms 71:1-3 HCSB** LORD, I seek refuge in You; never let me be disgraced. (2) In Your justice, rescue and deliver me; listen closely to me and save me. (3) Be a rock of refuge for me, where I can always go. Give the command to save me, for You are my rock and fortress.

8. Accept your true worth as given by God.
 - a. You are loved. (John 3:16-17)
 - **John 3:16-17 HCSB** "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. (17) For God did not send His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

 - b. You are no longer what you used to be. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - **2 Corinthians 5:17 HCSB** (17) Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come.

Warnings to loved ones.

1. Don't be forceful or controlling. (Proverbs 12:18)
 - **Proverbs 12:18 HCSB** There is one who speaks rashly, like a piercing sword; but the tongue of the wise *brings* healing.

2. Don't be unrealistic about your expectations for change. (Proverbs 19:11)
 - **Proverbs 19:11 HCSB** A person's insight gives him patience, and his virtue is to overlook an offense.

3. Don't assume that all "professionals" are equally capable. (Proverbs 15:22)

- **Proverbs 15:22 HCSB** Plans fail when there is no counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.
- 4. Don't let the victim see their weight when being weighed. (Proverbs 16:21)
 - **Proverbs 16:21 HCSB** **Anyone with a wise heart is called discerning**, and pleasant speech increases learning.
- 5. Don't fail to request help from former anorexics. (Proverbs 27:17)
 - **Proverbs 27:17 HCSB** Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.
- 6. Don't give up. (1 Corinthians 13:4, 7-8)
 - **1 Corinthians 13:4 HCSB** Love is patient; love is kind. Love does not envy; is not boastful; is not conceited;
 - **1 Corinthians 13:7-8a HCSB** (love) bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **(8)** Love never ends.