Health Consequences of Disordered Eating

- Can be fatal! Eating disorders have the highest death rate of any psychiatric illness.
- Malnutrition and specific nutrient deficiencies.
- Weakened immune system and more frequently sick.
- Reduction of sex hormones, infertility, absence of menses (in women), and bone loss.

- Complications of laxative abuse:
  - Dehydration. No fat loss! (At most, 12% reduction in calories consumed. Most calories are already absorbed.)
  - Constipation / diarrhea. Inability to regulate bowels on own.

- Complications of diuretic abuse:
  - Dehydration. No fat loss!
  - Electrolyte imbalances. (Low blood potassium can cause irregular heart beat and death.)

- Complications of self-induced vomiting:
  - Dehydration. No fat loss! (An after-binge vomiting episode retains about 1200 calories.)
  - Acid/base and electrolyte imbalances. (Can be fatal.)
  - Inflamed/torn esophagus, stomach ulcers, and internal bleeding.
  - Severe dental decay.

- Complications of diet pill use: (containing ephedrine, caffeine, & other stimulants)
  - Increased blood pressure and heart rate irregularities.
  - Insomnia, nervousness (anxiety), and tremors.
  - Headaches and seizures.
  - Heart attacks, strokes, and even death!

- Complications of restrictive eating & dieting:
  - Constipation, lightheadedness, fatigue, and depression.
  - Loss of lean body mass vs. fat tissue.
  - Reduction in metabolic rate.
  - Increased risk for binge eating.

- Complications of binge eating & excessive weight gain:
  - High blood pressure, heart disease, and gall bladder disease.
  - Insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes.
  - Joint problems and osteoarthritis.

- Complications of steroid use:
  - Dangerous irritability and aggression while taking them; can lead to violent crimes and even physical abuse of loved ones (“roid rage”).
  - Severe episodes of depression during withdrawal.
  - Decreased “good” and increased “bad” cholesterol levels; increased risk of heart disease, stroke, and possibly prostate cancer.
  - If using injectibles, increased risk of AIDS, hepatitis B and C, and local infections.
  - In men: acne, hair loss, gynecomastia (growth of breast tissue), and testicle shrinkage.
  - In women: acne, deepened voice and other masculine effects.