

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.