

Anorexia Nervosa

People with anorexia nervosa are obsessed with thinness and are often intensely afraid of gaining weight. They may be very underweight but not always. They eat very little and will resist eating when they are hungry. They often feel like their bodies are much larger than they are. Often they have ritualistic ways of eating or exercising.

People with anorexia often:

- spend a lot of time thinking about food or planning meals
- love to cook for others but will not eat what they make
- exercise in a driven way, regardless of whether they are sick or tired
- avoid places or gatherings where food is present
- eat only when alone
- wear layers or baggy clothes to conceal weight loss
- measure their bodies or weigh themselves frequently
- minimize or hide the severity of their behaviours
- cut out certain foods or food groups

The health consequences of anorexia include:

- bone density loss
- heart failure
- hair loss
- dry skin
- loss of menstrual periods
- digestive issues
- weakness
- dizziness
- tiredness
- the growth of downy hair on the body (called lanugo)

Anorexia has the highest death rate of any mental illness. It rarely goes away without treatment. The longer behaviours go untreated, the harder it can be to change.