

Anorexia Nervosa

Symptoms:

- Restrictive eating
- Dramatic weight loss
- Intense fear of weight gain
- Sense of self-worth is overly related to body image
- Denial of the severity of the situation

Possible warning signs:

- Preoccupation with weight, food, calories, carbohydrate or fat content of food
- Frequent comments about body size or shape
- In some cases, increased importance and rigidity of exercise
- Difficulty eating foods of unknown calorie content (relying more on packaged foods)
- Difficulty in making decisions at restaurants/refusal in eating at restaurants
- Avoidance of eating with others
- Denial of hunger
- Development of food rituals (eating foods in certain order, cutting into tiny bites, breaking foods apart instead of biting into them)
- Social withdrawal

While each person's recovery is different, these are some of the general steps in nutrition therapy:

- Provide a meal plan so that calories can be methodically increased
- Gradually increase the meal plan to assist the client in returning to a healthy weight
- Increase the variety of foods
- Challenge distorted thinking about foods and weight
- Eventually return to intuitive eating (eating according to the body's feeling of hunger and fullness)