

Eating Disorders Fact Sheet

BELMONT CENTER FOR COMPREHENSIVE TREATMENT

Anorexia

Anorexia is self-imposed starvation. It is a serious life-threatening disorder that often stems from underlying emotional causes. Although people with anorexia are obsessed with food, they continually deny their hunger. Anorexia can cause severe medical problems and even lead to death.

What are the signs of anorexia?

- Continued dieting when a person is not overweight
- Preoccupation with food, nutrition, calories and/or cooking
- Thinness – loss of 15 percent or more of ideal body weight
- Denial of hunger
- Excessive exercising
- Hair loss
- Fine downy hair on face, arms and/or legs
- Hiding food, pretending to have eaten and hiding of weight loss
- Preoccupation with weight and body image; frequently weighing oneself
- Intense fear of gaining weight and/or becoming fat despite low weight
- Complaints of feeling bloated or nauseated when normal amounts of food are eaten
- Intolerance of cold temperatures; person feels chronically cold, despite temperature
- Distorted body image – feeling fat even when person is thin
- Loss of menstruation
- Food rituals such as cutting food into tiny pieces

Bulimia

Bulimia can be a life-threatening disorder brought on by repeated cycles of out-of-control eating followed by some form of purging. Vomiting; excessive use of diuretics, laxatives or syrup of ipecac; severe restrictions of food intake; and over-exercise can all be forms of purging.

What are signs of bulimia?

- Vomiting, use of laxatives, diuretics, enemas, syrup of ipecac or diet pills
- Binge eating
- Frequent weight fluctuations
- Menstrual irregularities
- Swollen parotid glands (in front of the ear)
- Strict diet followed by binges
- Inability to voluntarily stop eating
- Feeling out of control
- Excessive concern about weight
- Frequent use of the bathroom after meals
- Depressive moods
- Overeating in reaction to emotional stress
- Secretive eating
- Preoccupation with food and body image

Eating Disorders Program at Belmont

Inpatient Program

The Eating Disorders Program is a treatment program for patients ages 12 to 65 who are struggling with anorexia nervosa, bulimia or compulsive overeating. The program consists of a multidisciplinary treatment team that includes a psychiatrist, a psychologist, social workers, psychiatric nurses, psychiatric technicians, dieticians, and other mental health professionals.

The Eating Disorders Program philosophy maintains that people with eating disorders need help in two key areas in order to begin their recovery:

- 1) nutritional rehabilitation, and
- 2) developing an understanding of the psychological underpinnings of the eating disorder.

Nutritional rehabilitation involves helping patients normalize their food intake. To achieve this, all patients are assessed by a dietician and given three supervised meals and three snacks a day. Nutrition therapy, menu planning groups and cooking groups are also a part of nutrition rehabilitation.

The second focus of the program is to help patients obtain a better understanding of the emotional reasons for their difficulties with food, weight and body image so they can live healthier, more fulfilling lives. To help patients identify and explore their psychological needs, we offer a range of therapeutic modalities, including:

- daily meetings with psychiatrist
- individual psychotherapy
- family therapy
- group therapy
- nutrition group
- family issues group
- after-meal support group
- relapse prevention group
- occupational therapy
- art therapy
- milieu therapy
- psychodrama
- experiential therapy
- yoga/relaxation

To ensure physical well-being, all patients receive a medical evaluation and medical monitoring. Because Belmont is part of Albert Einstein Healthcare Network, access to medical specialists is readily available.

Day Treatment Program

Like the inpatient program, the Eating Disorders Day Treatment Program offers intensive treatment for adults and adolescents struggling with anorexia, bulimia or compulsive overeating. The program provides an alternative to inpatient care if the severity of symptoms does not warrant the intensity of inpatient treatment. And, it can serve as a bridge between inpatient and outpatient care.

For appointments, call 215-581-3980

For additional information on other Belmont Behavioral Health programs, call 215-581-3721