



# Anorexia Nervosa

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**Do you think you're "fat" while friends and family believe you're too thin? Does the possibility of becoming overweight terrify you? Are you constantly restricting or refusing to eat? Does your self-esteem depend entirely on your weight and shape?**

If you agree with any of these questions, it's possible that you have anorexia nervosa. Individuals with the disorder deliberately restrict their food intake in an attempt to meet an "ideal" weight. Often believing they're "fat" even when emaciated, their body image is severely distorted. But, to the surprise and dismay of loved ones, these individuals often take pride in having the disorder. To them, restricting food until they're malnourished commonly means superior willpower and strength.

## **Deadly Consequences**

Anorexia is a life-threatening disorder that claims the lives of thousands of people every year. In fact, it has the highest mortality rate of all mental disorders, including depression. The malnutrition and dehydration caused by anorexia can lead to seizure disorders, cardiac problems, bloating, early onset osteoporosis, severe fatigue, and more. The disorder's psychological impact is devastating, robbing people of their vitality, ability to cope, and sense of joy.

## **What You Can Do**

Pathways Center for Counseling specializes in helping individuals with anorexia and their families. To ensure that you or your loved one receive the most effective treatment possible, our therapist, Heather Kitchen, collaborates with a team of professionals in the community, including physicians, dieticians and other practitioners. When appropriate, she refers clients, requiring more intensive care, to inpatient and day treatment programs.

In working with anorexic adolescents, Heather uses the "Maudsley approach," a family-centered treatment strategy proven to be very effective in helping individuals with anorexia who are younger than 18 years of age. Remember, if anorexia may be a problem, seek help as soon as possible. The earlier you receive treatment, the better the outcome for your health and recovery. Call us at 336-686-1689.