

# Guidelines for Clinical Care: Assessment and Treatment of Eating Disorders

## Anorexia Nervosa

- Persistent restriction of energy intake, leading to significantly low body weight\*
- Intense fear of gaining weight or becoming fat
- Disturbance in self-perceived weight or shape

## Bulimia Nervosa

- Recurrent episodes of binge eating\*\*
- Recurrent inappropriate compensatory behaviors to prevent weight gain\*\*\*
- Behaviors occur on average at least 1/week for 3 months
- Self-evaluation is unduly influenced by shape and weight

## Binge Eating Disorder

- Recurrent episodes of binge eating\*\*
- Occurs at least 1/week for 3 months in the absence of recurrent compensatory behaviors
- Binge eating episodes associated with three or more of the following: 1) Eating more rapidly than normal; 2) Eating until feeling uncomfortably full; 3) eating large amounts of food when not physically hungry; 4) eating alone because of embarrassment of how much one is eating; 5) feeling disgusted with oneself, depressed, or guilty afterwards

\* Weight: Less than minimally normal or for children and adolescents, less than minimally expected

\*\* Binge Eating: Eating a significantly larger amount of food than most individuals would under the same conditions in a discrete period of time (e.g. 2 hours) and experiencing a sense of loss of control

\*\*\* Compensatory Behaviors: Self-induced vomiting, misuse of laxatives, diuretics or medications with the intention of influencing shape or weight, fasting or excessive exercise

### PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS‡

Marked weight loss, gain or fluctuation	Heart Palpitations
Cold intolerance	Arrhythmias
Weakness	Shortness of Breath
Fatigue or lethargy	Edema
Dizziness/Syncope	Low Bone density
Hot Flashes	Lanugo or hair loss
Amenorrhea	Bloating, abdominal pain
Dry Skin	Blood in stools
Pallor or easy bruising	
Chest pain	
Sinus Bradycardia	

### ASSESSMENT‡

**MEDICAL LABS:** CBC, serum electrolytes, calcium, magnesium and glucose; liver function tests; urinalysis and measurement of thyrotropin level

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL RELATED QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING HISTORY TAKING

Comorbid Symptoms (e.g., depression, anxiety, obsessionality)  
History of an eating disorder  
Family history of psychiatric illnesses  
Suicidal Ideation  
History of physical or sexual abuse  
Current individual and family stressors

#### ED RELATED QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING HISTORY TAKING

Most ever weight, height at that time, when was that; lowest weight in past year?  
What do you think is your healthy weight? What would you like to weigh?  
Exercise: How much, How often, Level of intensity? How stressed if you miss it?  
Current eating habits: sizes, restrictions, recent vegetarianism, 24 hr dietary recall  
Any calorie counting?  
Any Binge Eating  
Purging or other compensatory behaviors

## EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING FOR CARE — Multidisciplinary teams are encouraged across all levels of care

Higher level of care is warranted when: 1) Six weeks of no symptom improvement; 2) Greater structure needed to support treatment goals; or 3) Medical stabilization needed or psychiatric concerns present

### LEVELS OF CARE

Outpatient	Intensive Outpatient	Partial Hospitalization	Residential	Inpatient
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often a first line of care</li> <li>• Routine individual or group psychotherapy sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intermediate level of care</li> <li>• Structured treatment for a few hours per day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intermediate level of care</li> <li>• Structured treatment for 6- or 10-hours per day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24-hour supervised care for patients who are medically compromised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For patients medically compromised due to low weight or bingeing/ purging</li> </ul>

‡For more information, please refer to: [www.moedc.org](http://www.moedc.org); Academy for Eating Disorders, Eating disorders: Critical points for early recognition and medical risk management in the care of individuals with eating disorders (2nd Edition), 2012.



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[www.moedc.org](http://www.moedc.org)