

ARE YOU DYING TO BE THIN?

INTRODUCTION

Due to an increase in publicity and public awareness, anorexia nervosa (key symptom: extreme weight loss due to self-starvation accompanied by an intense fear of being fat or gaining weight) and bulimia nervosa (key symptom: binge eating—eating what the person considers to be too much food in a way that feels out of control—followed by purging) are becoming more and more openly acknowledged.

The following questionnaire will tell you whether or not you think or behave in a way that indicates that you have tendencies toward anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa.

QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS: Answer the questions below honestly. Respond as you are now, not the way you used to be or the way you would like to be. Write the number of your answer in the space at the left. Do not leave any questions blank unless instructed to do so.

- ____1. I have eating habits that are different from those of my family and friends.
1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- ____2. I find myself panicking if I cannot exercise as I planned because I am afraid I will gain weight if I don't.
1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- ____3. My friends tell me I am thin, but I don't believe them because I feel fat.
1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- ____4. (*Females only*) My menstrual period has stopped or become irregular due to no known medical reasons.
1) True 2) False
- ____5. I have become obsessed with food to the point that I cannot go through a day without worrying about what I will or will not eat.
1) Almost always 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- ____6. I have lost more than 15% of what is considered a healthy weight for my height (e.g., female, 5'4" tall, healthy weight = 122 lb, lost 20 lb) and currently weigh that weight or less.
1) True 2) False
- ____7. I would panic if I got on the scale tomorrow and found out I had gained 2 lb.
1) Almost always 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- ____8. I find that I prefer to eat alone or when I am sure no one will see me, thus make excuses so I can eat less and less with friends and family.
1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- ____9. I find myself going on uncontrollable eating binges during which I consume large amounts of food to the point that I feel sick and make myself vomit.
1) Never 2) Less than 1 time per week 3) 1–6 times per week 4) 1 or more times per day
- ____10. (*Note: Answer only if your answer to 9 is "1"; otherwise leave blank.*) I find myself compulsively eating more than I want to while feeling out of control and/or unaware of what I am doing.
1) Never 2) Less than 1 time per week 3) 1–6 times per week 4) 1 or more times per day
- ____11. I use laxatives or diuretics as a means of weight control.
1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Sometimes 4) On a regular basis
- ____12. I find myself playing games with food (e.g., cutting it up into tiny pieces, hiding food so people will think I ate it, chewing it and spitting it out without swallowing it, keeping hidden stashes of food) and/or telling myself certain foods are bad.
1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never

continues

continued

- _____ 13. People around me have become very interested in what I eat and I find myself getting angry at them for pushing me to eat more.
1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- _____ 14. I have felt more depressed and irritable recently than I used to and/or have been spending an increasing amount of time alone.
1) True 2) False
- _____ 15. I keep a lot of my fears about food and eating to myself because I am afraid no one would understand.
1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- _____ 16. I enjoy making gourmet and/or high-calorie meals for others as long as I don't have to eat any myself.
1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- _____ 17. The most powerful fear in my life is the fear of gaining weight or becoming fat.
1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- _____ 18. I exercise a lot (more than 4 times per week and/or more than 4 hours per week) as a means of weight control.
1) True 2) False
- _____ 19. I find myself totally absorbed when reading books or magazines about dieting, exercising, and calorie counting to the point that I spend hours studying them.
1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- _____ 20. I tend to be a perfectionist and am not satisfied with myself unless I do things perfectly.
1) Almost always 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- _____ 21. I go through long periods of time without eating (fasting) or eating very little as a means of weight control.
1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
- _____ 22. It is important to me to try to be thinner than all of my friends.
1) Almost always 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never

SCORING

Step 1: Add scores together.

Step 2: Compare your score with the table below.

38 or less— Strong tendencies toward anorexia nervosa.

39–50 — Strong tendencies toward bulimia nervosa.

50–60 — Weight conscious. May or may not have tendencies toward an eating disorder. Not likely to have anorexia or bulimia nervosa. May have tendencies toward compulsive eating or obesity.

Over 60 — Extremely unlikely to have anorexia or bulimia nervosa; however, scoring over 60 does not rule out tendencies toward compulsive eating or obesity.

- **If you scored below 50**, it would be wise for you to (1) seek more information about anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa and (2) contact a counselor, pastor, teacher, or physician in order to find out if you have an eating disorder and, if you do, talk about what kind of assistance would be best for you.
- **If you scored between 50 and 60**, it would be a good idea for you to talk to a counselor, pastor, teacher or physician in order to find out if you have an eating disorder and, if you do, how to get some help.
- **If you scored over 60** but have questions and concerns about the way you eat and/or your weight, it would be a good idea for you to talk to a counselor, pastor, teacher, or physician in order to determine if you have an eating disorder and, if you do, how to get some help.

Note! Eating disorders are potentially life-threatening disorders that can be overcome with the proper information, support, and counseling. The earlier you seek help, the better, although it is never too late to start on the road to recovery.