

Anorexia nervosa

Characteristics

BMI = weight in kgs/height in metres²

BMI <17.5

Definition based on ICD-10

Body weight at least 15% below the ideal weight

Weight loss is self-induced by avoidance of fattening foods. One or more of the following may also be present: self-induced vomiting, self-induced purging, excessive exercise, use of appetite suppressants and/or diuretics.

Body image distortion. Endocrine disorder manifests as amenorrhoea in females and loss of sexual interest in males. If onset in prepubertal then pubertal events are delayed.

Common scenario is of a college student who has been forced to see you by her parents or G.P. Try to develop rapport by asking what the patient does and general questions. Ask why the patient has come to see you. If she says that her family is concerned about her eating habits, ask if in her opinion their concerns are valid and how does she feel about it seeing you? Then proceed with the following:

1. How much do you weigh?
2. What is your height?
3. Has your weight changed recently?
4. What is the most you have weighed?
5. What is your ideal weight?
6. How do you plan to reach your ideal weight?
7. How much time do you spend thinking about food and losing weight?
8. Take me through a typical eating day
9. Are there times when you eat large quantities of food in a short span of time?
10. How often do you do that?
11. Why do you do it? How does it make you feel?
12. Do you ever use laxatives to lose weight? How often? When did you start using them?
13. What about water tablets? What kind? Where do you get them?
14. Have you ever made yourself sick on purpose? How often?
15. Do you use exercise to control your weight? How often do you exercise? How many hours a day?
16. What is your energy level like?
17. How do you feel about yourself?
18. Do you see yourself as fat? Have people commented about it?
19. Do you have regular menstrual cycles? When did they stop?
20. Any problems at home? Do you get along with family and friends?
21. Are you aware of any physical health problems?