

Anorexia Nervosa

Mindy is a 5'5" ballerina who weighed 105 pounds at the beginning of the school year. Ever since she made the Varsity Dance team, she has become hyperconscious about the way she looks, how much she weighs, and what she eats. She weighs herself before and after every meal and consumes only lettuce, grapes, celery, two slices of toast, and Diet Coke every single day. After two months, she was down to 90 pounds and stopped getting her period.

Someone with **anorexia nervosa** may have an experience like the one above.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, "many people with anorexia nervosa see themselves as overweight, even when they are clearly underweight. Eating, food, and weight control become obsessions. People with anorexia nervosa typically weigh themselves repeatedly, portion food carefully, and eat very small quantities of only certain foods."¹

According to MentalHealth.gov, **signs and symptoms** of anorexia nervosa can include:

- an intense fear of gaining weight or becoming fat, even when underweight
- Refusing to keep weight at what is considered normal for one's age and height
- Having a distorted body image, being very focused on body weight or shape, and refusing to admit the seriousness of weight loss
- Not having a period for three or more cycles (in women)
- Cutting food into small pieces or moving them around the plate instead of eating
- Exercising excessively
- Refusing to eat around other people
- Blotchy or yellow skin that is dry and covered with fine hair
- Confused or slow thinking, along with poor memory or judgment
- Depression
- Dry mouth
- Extreme sensitivity to cold (wearing several layers of clothing to stay warm)
- Loss of bone strength
- Wasting away of muscle and loss of body fat²

Bibliography

¹ The National Institute of Mental Health, "Eating Disorders." Accessed July 25, 2013.
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/eating-disorders/index.shtml>.

² U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, "Anorexia Nervosa." Accessed July 25, 2013.
<http://www.mentalhealth.gov/what-to-look-for/eating-disorders/anorexia/index.html>.