**Eating Disorders**

**What are they?**

Eating disorders are a category of illnesses that characterized by irregular eating activities and habits and severe distress or concern about body weight or shape. The most common types of eating disorders include: Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Binge Eating Disorder.

**Anorexia Nervosa:**

This illness involves an obsessive fear of gaining weight, refusal to maintain a healthy body weight and an unrealistic perception of body image. People with this condition will often severely restrict the quantity of food they eat and view themselves as “overweight” even though they are likely under healthy recommendations.

**Bulimia Nervosa:**

This illness involves cycling between repeated binge of eating, followed by compensatory actions for the overeating such as forced vomiting, excessive exercise, or extreme use of laxatives or diuretics. Individuals with this condition may fear gaining weight and feel very poorly about their body image.

**Binge Eating Disorders:**

People who suffer from this condition will frequently lose control of their eating habits and over-eat. Unlike bulimia nervosa, these individuals will not compensate their overeating with purging or fasting. Because of this, many people with binge eating disorders may be obese and be at risk for associated conditions with obesity

Eating disorders can develop at any age and impacts a large variety of people. There are many signs and symptoms, and these can vary based on the condition. Some of which include: chronic dieting despite being underweight, constant weight fluctuations, obsession with calories and fat contents of food and switching between periods of overeating and fasting.

Treatment for eating disorders is comprised of a few components which include: medical care and monitoring of the condition, nutritional interventions to achieve healthy weight values, therapy, and possibly medications.

This is simply a brief overview of eating disorders, which are very complex and can have a variety of factors involved. Resources are available to help educate people further if they are at risk for developing, or currently have an eating disorder. Some resources include:

**National Eating Disorder Association** [**www.nationaleatingdisorders.org**](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org) **800-931-2237**

**And**

**Eating Disorder Hope** [**www.eatingdisorderhope.com**](http://www.eatingdisorderhope.com)