

Physical Complications of Eating Disorders

Eating disorders wreak havoc on the body. If you or someone you love has an eating disorder, it is imperative to have a complete physical evaluation immediately so as to treat any medical complications before they turn deadly.

Some of the physical complications associated with eating disorders are:

- Dehydration & electrolyte imbalance
- Heart muscle damage
- Irregular heartbeat
- Low blood pressure
- Muscle paralysis
- Kidney damage or failure
- Convulsions, seizure
- Liver damage or failure
- Loss of menstrual periods (i.e., amenorrhea)
- Loss of bone density (i.e., osteopenia, osteoporosis)
- Fertility problems
- Dry and brittle hair, nails, and skin
- Edema (swollen legs and feet)
- Sore throat
- Esophagus damage
- Acid reflux
- Gastrointestinal damage (e.g., bloating, constipation, diarrhea)
- Tooth enamel damage & discoloration

If you or your loved one has experienced some of these complications as a result of an eating disorder, it is imperative to immediately see a physician so as to have a thorough physical evaluation, which should include complete blood work, an EKG, and a bone density scan. Additionally, follow-up care with an endocrinologist and gastroenterologist are critical, since these are two of the body systems that are most affected by eating disorders.