



## *An Overview*

# Eating Disorders

### **WHO DOESN'T WORRY ABOUT FOOD?**

We all do at times. But people with eating disorders live in fear of food and of being fat. Often unable to control their food intake, they hide their eating habits. Secret starving, binge-eating or the purging of food are all common, as are anxiety, depression, guilt and shame, which accompany eating disorders.

Obesity, bulimia and anorexia have reached epidemic proportions. It's no surprise, given the billions of dollars spent each year on diets and media promotion of a "thin" ideal. Despite the fact that tens of millions of people suffer from eating disorders, many are unaware of the health symptoms and risks which are unique to each. Many victims of such disorders are psychologically unable or unwilling to seek available treatment.



### ***Get Professional Diagnosis***

Many people try to diagnose an eating disorder without professional help. Anorectics are often described as always feeling "fat," bulimics as either overweight or average, and obese individuals as compulsively overeating high-fat, high-calorie foods. While these and other symptoms are common, many other symptoms will be unrecognized by anyone except a professional eating disorder specialist. Only your doctor or a specialist should diagnose an eating disorder.

### ***Recovering***

Eating disorders are treatable. You really can feel good about yourself again. Learning to recognize the symptoms of your particular eating disorder, or that of a family member or friend, is an important learning process which is best guided by an appropriate professional. He or she can discuss health risks and treatment options. With understanding and commitment, you can plan a lifelong recovery from compulsive overeating.