



Section of Eating Disorders
Institute of Psychiatry

Eating Disorders Unit
South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

COULD THIS BE AN EATING DISORDER?*

The following questionnaire may be a guideline to establish whether there are sufficient reasons to be worried about a person's state possibly being an eating disorder.

Check whether each of the 30 statements is applicable and then give points like this:

yes = 2

no = 0

in case of doubt (more or less applicable, only a supposition) = 1

Add these points up, and then interpret the score as follows:

0 - 10 points = in all probability nothing abnormal is (yet) going on;

11 - 20 points = probably there is no reason to worry for the time being but repeat this test within two months;

21 - 30 points = here one may clearly suspect that the result concerns an eating disorder, certainly it would be a good idea to see a physician or other health care professional;

31 - 60 points = no doubt a severe eating disorder is involved, for which specialised help is needed as soon as possible.

Bear in mind that no single questionnaire is sufficient to make a diagnosis. That has to be left to an experienced health care professional.

*Based on the Anorectic Behaviour Observation Scale (ABOS) developed by Walter Vandereycken (Catholic University Leuven, Belgium)

1. Avoids eating with others or puts off coming to the dinner table for as long as possible.
2. Shows obvious signs of tension at mealtimes.
3. Shows anger and hostility at mealtimes.
4. Begins by cutting up food into small pieces.
5. Complains about "too much" or "too fat" food.
6. Exhibits unusual "food faddism" (always wants something special or particular)
7. Attempts to bargain about food (for instance, "I will eat this if I don't have to eat that").
8. Picks at food or eats very slowly.
9. Prefers diet products (with low calorie content).
10. Seldom alleges to be hungry.
11. Likes to help in the kitchen or to cook, but avoids tasting or eating.
12. Vomits after meals.
13. Hides food in napkins, clothing or handbag during meals.
14. Secretly throws away food (outside, into dustbin, or down toilet or sink).
15. Conceals or gathers ("hoards") food or sweets (in own room, wardrobe).
16. Eats alone, in secret or at unusual hours (for example very early in the morning or at night).
17. Dislikes visits or parties (because of the "obligation" to eat).
18. Has sometimes difficulties in stopping eating or eats unusually large amounts of foods or sweets ("binges").
19. Frequently complains about constipation.
20. Often takes (or asks for) laxatives/purgatives.
21. Claims to be too fat regardless of weight loss.
22. Talks a lot about slimming, dieting or ideal body forms.
23. Often leaves the table during meals (for instance to get something in the kitchen).
24. Walks or moves a lot, or stands whenever possible.
25. Is as active as possible (for example cleaning the room or clearing the table).
26. Does a lot of sports or physical exercises.
27. Is very diligent in studies or work.
28. Is seldom tired and takes little or no rest.
29. Considers herself to be "healthy" or "normal".
30. Is reluctant to see a doctor or refuses medical examinations.