

Eating Disorders: What you should know

Have you ever come across promising diets in magazines that tell us we can lose as much weight as we want and not have to go through any kind of discomfort? They may say that you can eat anything you want as long as you take those pills or drink those malts or...

Society gives us the impression that we'll be happy, gorgeous, and successful if we are thin like the models in magazines. Have you ever watched a movie about an obese person who was extremely successful and popular? I'm sure that the answer to that would be no - in most cases.

Most of us, at one time or another, have heard of anorexia nervosa and bulimia. These two common eating disorders often occur together, in that the person who has anorexia nervosa often has bulimia also.

Anorexia nervosa is characterized by "deliberate self-starvation in the pursuit of excessive thinness." Often times the person will not eat for weeks at a time and then may binge for hours. This bingeing may sometimes end with the victim self-inducing vomiting. These endless routines of bingeing and then vomiting are classified under the term of Bulimia.

Some warning signs of Anorexia Nervosa are: noticeable weight loss; excessive, compulsive exercising; denial of hunger; frequent weighing; slow, methodical, ritualistic food habits; and leaving for the washroom after eating.

Some warning signs of Bulimia are: excessive concern about weight and obsession with food; frequent overeating especially when distressed or under tension; disappearing after a meal (secretive

vomiting); evidence of vomit or laxative abuse in the bathroom; withdrawal from activities and isolation from peers; expressing guilt or shame about eating; and depressive moods and irritability.

If you have noticed any of these warning signs in your peers or roommates, it would be wise to express concern about their eating habits. Support groups are held at the hospital for victims of eating disorders; and you might advise your friend to contact John MacMillan at the Richmond Centre (368-4430). Mr. MacMillan is very experienced in the area of counselling anorexics and bulimics.

