**THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EATING DISORDERS**

**What is considered an “eating disorder”?**
- Eating disorders are characterized by serious disturbances in eating habits.
- They cause an individual to go too far to avoid gaining weight.
- Common eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia, and binge eating.
- It can be hard to differentiate between normal worries about weight and actual eating disorders.
- Your doctor can diagnose an eating disorder by asking questions, performing a physical examination, and ordering tests.

**What are the warning signs of an eating disorder?**
- Obsessing over body weight (even if not overweight), calories, and food.
- Using diet pills, water pills, and laxatives to avoid gaining weight.
- Self-inducing of vomiting after meals.
- Lying about eating or refusing to eat.
- Denying that anything is wrong.
- Fainting.
- Exercising too much.
- No longer having menstrual periods.
- Calluses or scars on the knuckles from forced vomiting.

**How are eating disorders treated?**
- Individual and family counseling.
- Diet and nutrition guidance.
- Medical care and monitoring.
- Referral to a specialist for treatment.
- Hospitalization for individuals who are malnourished or very thin.
- Treatment is tailored to meet individual needs.

For More Information

- [http://womenshealth.gov/body-image/eating-disorders/](http://womenshealth.gov/body-image/eating-disorders/) Information on eating disorders, including fact sheets on anorexia nervosa, bulimia, and binge eating, from the Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women’s Health.

- [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/) Information and support resources, including a parent tool kit, from the National Eating Disorders Association.
