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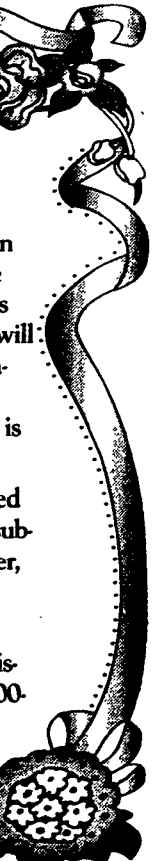
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that the two most common forms of eating disorders among young women are *anorexia nervosa* and *bulimia*.

Anorexia nervosa is characterized by an aversion to food and an obsession with weight loss. Litter termed this condition as "the relentless pursuit of thinness."

Bulimia is characterized by eating large quantities of food and then ridding oneself of the food through such acts as self-induced vomiting.

Both disorders are reversible, Litter said. However, continued body abuse can cause irreparable physical damage — or even death.

Although Litter said that more than 90 percent of her patients are female, one high-school coach pointed out that body image also fuels compulsive behavior in boys.

"You can become obsessed with being a good-looking, musclebound athlete and get caught up in the same things," said Mike D'Aloisio, the head football and boys' basketball coach at Elmira Notre Dame High School. He explained that the desire to look "bigger" can lead young men to use such harmful drugs as steroids.

Peter Buckley, a football and basketball player at Notre Dame, said that teenage boys can be preoccupied with muscles in the same manner that girls are with thinness.

"Obviously, the more muscle you have the more people are going to say, 'That's more like the perfect person,'" said Peter, 17, from the St. Anthony/St. Patrick cluster in Elmira.

This thought process, Peter stated, is where the root of obsessive behavior lies.

"When you start doing things to be accepted by other people, instead of accepting yourself, you're in trouble," Peter commented.

"If you have to hurt yourself to look good, what's the point?" Maggie added.

D'Aloisio likened the unattainable goal of achieving body perfection to that of a rich person who seeks even greater wealth. He pointed out that billionaire Howard Hughes "went to his grave trying to make more money."

Litter suggested that people avoid such pitfalls by maintaining balanced eating and exercise routines, and by surrounding themselves with close friends and family members.

Above all, Litter stressed, teens should remember that outward appearance won't determine your true popularity.

"There are other things about you than just your body shape," Litter remarked.

Melissa said that girls should hold onto that philosophy when they're sizing up their dating prospects.

"I'd rather go out with someone who treated me well than someone who gained 50 pounds in muscle," Melissa stated.

**Coming Next Week:
Teens recall past
Christmases.**



Do you, or someone you know, have an eating disorder? Here are some signs to watch for. Information was provided by Theresa Litter, an expert on eating disorders from Rochester's Strong Memorial Hospital.

Anorexia Nervosa

- Restricted eating, such as severe dieting or fasting.
- Rituals such as cutting food into small portions, and counting bites of food.
- Intense fear of becoming fat, regardless of low weight.
- Fear of food and situations where food may be present.
- Rigid exercising.
- Dressing in layers to hide weight loss.
- Bingeing.
- Use of laxatives, enemas or diuretics to get rid of food.
- Persistent or significant weight loss.
- Absence of menstruation.
- Paleness.
- Feelings of coldness.
- Increasing feelings of fatigue.
- Dizziness and fainting spells.
- Mood swings.
- Perfectionist attitude.
- Insecurity about one's capabilities regardless of actual performance.
- Feelings of self-worth based on what is or isn't eaten.

Bulimia

- Bingeing.
- Secretive eating, evidenced by missing food.
- Preoccupation with talking about food and/or weight.
- Avoidance of restaurants, planned meals or social events if food is present.
- Self-belittlement when too much food has been eaten.
- Bathroom visits after meals.
- Vomiting, laxative abuse or fasting.
- Use of diet pills.
- Excessive/obsessive exercise.
- Fear of being fat, regardless of weight.
- Swollen glands, puffiness in cheeks or broken blood vessels under eyes.
- Complaints of sore throats.
- Complaints of fatigue and muscle ache.
- Unexplained tooth decay.
- Frequent weight fluctuations, often within a 10- to 15-pound range.
- Mood shifts that include depression, sadness, guilt and/or self-debate.
- Severe self-criticism.
- Need for approval in order to feel good about oneself.
- Self-worth determined by weight.

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