

## Biological Effects of Eating/Not Eating

### **Biological factors that may encourage the development of an eating disorder include:**

- Genetic predisposition to an imbalance in serotonin (a neurotransmitter involved in brain and mood function)
- An imbalance in serotonin that is brought about by severe weight loss, fasting, over-exercise, or vomiting
- Altered serotonin activity could cause anxious and obsessive behaviours and affect the control of appetite, and thus contribute to vulnerability
- Depression – due to changes in mood, & is a common sign of starvation & vitamin and mineral deficiencies
- Reduced blood flow to the temporal lobe

### Effects of Not Eating:

#### Anorexia:

- Damage to liver, heart & kidneys, due to the lack of food
- Swollen joints / brittle bones / osteoporosis
- Hair can fall out / fingernails break
- Cessation of menstrual periods
- Abdominal pain
- Severe malnutrition
- Increased risk of cardiac problems

#### **Bulimia:**

- Damage to stomach & kidneys due to vomiting
- Damage to intestinal tract from laxative use
- Tooth decay – due to acids that come up into the mouth while vomiting
- Cessation of menstrual periods
- Decreased potassium levels due to vomiting, which can lead to heart problems

#### **Eating**

...then when you start eating

- An increase in weight is only temporary, and is a sign that your body is healing
- Uncomfortable bloating – due to the body getting used to food again, this is natural and only temporary
- Regular dietary intake, speeds up metabolic rate, enabling you to burn calories more efficiently
- The body needs nutrients & food to work efficiently
- Improvement in mood – due to vitamin & mineral intake

<http://nutritionadvance.com/sugar-withdrawal-give-up = well worth a look>