



WEIGHT LOSS

Sudden or unexplained weight loss

CAUSES

EATING DISORDER

There are two most common types of eating disorders – *anorexia nervosa* and *bulimia nervosa*. Anorexia nervosa involves starving oneself to lose weight coupled with a distorted view of the self and the body. Bulimia, on the other hand, involves episodes of binge eating followed by episodes of purging or induced vomiting which are also coupled with the idea that one is fat and this is the only way to lose weight. Most often, people with these disorders have body weights that are under the normal range for their age, gender, height and body type. Though common in teenage girls and young women, these disorders also affect boys and men.

Symptoms:

- Rapid weight loss
- Intentional starvation
- Binge eating then induced vomiting
- Low self-esteem
- Distorted body image
- Excessive exercise



Excessive exercise may cause sudden weight loss.

DO:

- If an eating disorder is suspected on a family member or a friend, seek medical help.

DON'T:

- Don't be afraid to seek medical and professional counseling.

DEPRESSION

People suffering from clinical depression may not feel the urge to eat, leading to rapid weight loss. The most common types of depression are *unipolar depression* (long episodes of sadness, helplessness that may stretch for several years) and *bipolar depression* (episodes of sadness which alternate with euphoria; each episode may last for several weeks or months).

Symptoms:

- Weight loss
- Long periods of sadness, guilt, worthlessness or anxiety
- Insomnia
- Talks of suicide

DO:

- If depression ails a family member or a friend, seek medical help. The patient will need psychiatric and medical treatment.

DON'T:

- Do not ignore the symptoms that a family member or a friend is exhibiting. Depression can sometimes lead to suicide.

DON'T:

- Don't be afraid to seek medical and professional counseling.



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CHRONIC INFECTION

Chronic infections may cause weight loss in some people. When accompanied by other symptoms, consult a doctor for a diagnosis.

Symptoms:

- Weight loss
- Night sweats
- Recurring fever
- Bloody cough
- Sick, weak feeling

DO:

- Consult a doctor for a diagnosis.

DON'T:

- Don't ignore symptoms and weight loss. They could point to a more serious health condition.

OTHER CAUSES

Other causes may include inflammatory disorders, malignancies, metabolic disorders, nutrient malabsorption or thyroid conditions.

WOUND (PUNCTURE)

Wound caused by a sharp or pointed object

Puncture wounds, whether large or small, have the risk of being infected. A medical practitioner may prescribe antibiotics immediately if the wound is considerable and is in an area that can be easily infected. *Tetanus*, an infection which causes muscular spasm of voluntary muscles such as those in the jaw, can be avoided by booster shots injected every five years.

Symptoms:

- A deep or shallow wound from a sharp or pointed object
- Bleeding

DO:

- If the object is small and still inside the wound, remove with a pair of alcohol-sterilized tweezers being careful not to damage the tissue further. Clean the wound thoroughly with warm water and soap. Leave uncovered and keep dry. If the affected area is in a place where dirt can easily accumulate, cover with gauze and change two to three times a day.
- If the object is large and remains in the wound, seek emergency help.
- If blood is spurting from the wound or oozing out uncontrollably, seek emergency help.

DON'T:

- Don't let dirt settle in.

Use alcohol-sterilized tweezers to remove foreign objects that are inside the wound.

