ANOREXIA

Why would anyone hurt themselves? Anorexia is a deadly eating disorder that many individuals, both males and females, suffer from. The disease usually begins with a simple diet, but later turns into something more. Losing weight may not always be the reason an individual decides to take such drastic measures; other factors include stress, depression, insecurity, biological genes, and social factors (such as the media). Controlling what they eat is usually a response to the uncontrollable aspects in an anorexic’s life. Anorexia is prevalent in younger girls, which is far from surprising given our culture’s emphasis on having the “perfect body.” Sadly, these young girls do not consider the physical and mental damages that anorexia brings.

As some of you may agree, when you’re young, you never really consider the consequences for your actions. I know that I never took into account the harm I was doing to myself when I took my diet to the extreme. Only one thing was on my mind: losing weight. My sole goal was to have that model body and nothing else mattered.

However, I should have considered the effects of anorexia because there are many. For instance, your heart rate and blood pressure drop, which then leads to a lack of energy, numerous dizzy spells, and a weaker heart over all. Also, anorexia causes a decrease in bone density due to the excessive exercising as well as the lack of vitamins, so later on in life you are more prone to develop osteoporosis or arthritis. Furthermore, you can have a pause or loss in growth (so instead of getting taller, you are getting shorter).

In addition, girls who develop anorexia are more likely to be infertile or suffer miscarriages as they get older because of low amounts of estrogen. My cousin, for instance, suffered from this eating disorder as a teenager. Given that she missed so many menstrual cycles, she developed cancer. Luckily, it was detected early by a doctor. Today, she is doing much better and lives a happy life; but, she had suffered her share of miscarriages before finally giving birth to two healthy boys.

There are many more complications from anorexia; therefore, it is important for people to be aware of the symptoms in order to prevent this from happening to loved ones. According to the New York Times, some warning signs include: weight loss of 15% or more below the normal weight (which depends on your height), loss of menstruation (for girls) for at least 3 months, low blood pressure, self imposed food restrictions (extreme dieting), depression, isolation, and dry skin (due to body dehydration).

The Boston Globe has estimated that anorexia affects about 1% of the population and 10% of those cases end in death. New York Times reports that this eating disorder is found mainly in Caucasian women who are high academic achievers and have a goal-oriented family or
personality. So it has been suggested that the pressure as well as conflicts in the family can be a source for this disease.

In the end, anorexia is a deadly disease, but it can be overcome through the support of family, friends, and health care providers. However, it is truly up to the individual; if they want to get better, then they will and if they do not, then they simply won’t.

When you come right down to it, anorexia is an overpowering disorder which not only affects the victim, but also the people around them. The victim, however, does not usually pay heed to the fact that they are hurting themselves or the people around them; all that matters is control and the last thing they want is to lose that strength of mind. Although this disease is psychologically powerful it still can be beaten; but it takes time because it is a challenge in itself. The only thing the victim can do is take it a day at a time and learn how to live a healthier life… a life free from this eating disorder’s control.