

Anorexia Nervosa...

A psychological eating disorder most common in young women, where there is an obsessive fear of being fat. Symptoms include severe weight loss, restless energy, sometimes vigorous exercising, binge eating which at times is followed by deliberate vomiting, fatigue, loss of menstrual periods, depression, withdrawal, and refusal to admit to being ill. Professional treatment is vital, as death from malnutrition or dehydration is possible.

The following self-treatments can be useful in conjunction with orthodox approaches aimed at helping both the sufferer and the family.

Treatment - Practical Advice.

Try to talk to someone outside your family and immediate circle of friends. Some support groups and women's centres have telephone counselling lines which can provide immediate help and advice. Emotional support is important in treating this illness. Try to find a counsellor, therapist, friend or relative who you can trust to talk with and express your feelings. Becoming involved in creative activities helps express inner feelings, allowing parts of yourself that want to emerge and be recognized come out. Painting, listening to music, dancing, going to the theatre or cinema, gardening, doing pottery, photography or cooking are all activities which could help. Writing a journal of your thoughts and feelings permits you to have a private place to be honest with yourself about what is happening at an inner level.

Chinese Medicine

Professional treatment is necessary and would attempt to strengthen the digestive system and spleen and improve the capacity to absorb food which is sometimes lost after long periods of starvation. Nutrients prescribed to increase the appetite include rice and wheat sprouts, radish seeds or loganberries.

Massage

Receiving a regular massage from a therapist or learning to give massages and receive them from friends or family is a very good way to relax and unwind. It will also help you to feel more nurtured and comfortable with your body. Massage can be very healing, and can put you in touch with feelings from the past which may resolve psychological problems.

Orthodox

Careful assessment is made of the patient and her family, since the family can play an important role in the cause and treatment of this disorder. Specialized treatment is carried out in hospitals and clinics where the patient is encouraged to eat and receives counselling and therapeutic support.