Eating disorders are characterized by severely disturbed eating behavior and weight management. Eating disorders are more common in affluent societies where food is plentiful. Women are much more commonly affected than men. Anorexia nervosa is characterized by a body weight less than 85% of expected for age and height, and an intense fear of gaining weight. Anorexia nervosa affects about 0.5% to 1% of women in the United States. Bulimia nervosa, which affects 1% to 3% of women in the United States, is characterized by recurring episodes of binge eating followed by purge behaviors such as self-induced vomiting, use of laxatives or diuretics, fasting, or excessive exercise.

**ANOREXIA NERVOSA**

Anorexia nervosa typically begins during adolescence. Clients with anorexia nervosa have a distorted body image and irrational fear of gaining weight. They maintain weight loss by restricted calorie intake, often accompanied by excessive exercise. Some clients may exhibit binge–purge behavior. A number of risk factors, both biologic and psychosocial, have been identified for anorexia nervosa. Abnormal levels of neurotransmitters and other hormones may play a role. Women who develop anorexia nervosa tend to be obsessive.