Effects of Restrictive Dieting & Starvation

The negative consequences of dieting and fasting are too often overlooked. Many of the physical effects are the opposite of what a dieter is trying to achieve.

**Physical effects**
- Decreased resting metabolic rate (RMR)
- Drop in sex hormones (estrogen, testosterone)
- Decreased sexual interest
- Amenorrhea (no period)
- Bone loss
- Constipation and gastrointestinal upset
- Sleep disturbance
- Hypothermia (feeling cold all the time)
- Loss of lean body mass (muscle)
- Changes in brain chemistry that increase appetite and food cravings.

**Effects on attitudes and behaviors towards food**
- Food preoccupation
- Unusual eating habits
- Increased consumption of coffee, tea, and diet sodas
- Loss of body’s natural mechanisms for regulating hunger and fullness
- Dichotomous thinking about food (i.e. “good food, bad food” mentality)
- Binge eating

**Emotional and social effects**
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Irritability and anger
- Moodiness
- Psychotic episodes
- Personality changes
- Social withdrawal

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