

## ***Anorexia Nervosa***

### **Websites Reviewed & Critiqued by Julia Garnica Spring 2012**

1. Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia (2012). *Anorexia Nervosa*.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anorexia\\_nervosa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anorexia_nervosa)

Wikipedia is the first website that shows up when an individual types “anorexia” in to Google. The website initially describes Anorexia Nervosa as an eating disorder and distinguishes it from the medical term, anorexia, which refers to lack of appetite. It offers a general definition of the disorder and mentions its prevalence by age and gender. It goes more in detail later in the page and discusses signs and symptoms, medical complications, causes, diagnosis, treatment, epidemiology, and history. Each of these sections provides citations to scholarly articles and summaries that are listed at the bottom of the page.

Wikipedia offers a great amount of information regarding Anorexia Nervosa, but viewers should not solely rely on this website. Although Wikipedia frequently offers accurate and detailed information, it cannot be completely trusted for reason that anyone has the ability to update and change information on this website. Wikipedia may be a fine starting point for someone who is seeking information on Anorexia Nervosa, but should only be used as that.

2. PubMed Health (2012). *Anorexia Nervosa*.  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001401/>

The PubMed Health website is the first website to come up when an individual types the correct term for the diagnosis, Anorexia Nervosa, in to the search engine. It offers an explanation of the disorder as well as information regarding causes, symptoms, and risk factors; symptoms; signs and tests; treatment; prognosis; and complications. The information seems accurate, but brief. At the end of the page it suggests viewers who suspects they or someone else might be suffering from Anorexia Nervosa, should call a health care provider. It explains that getting medical help right away can reduce the severity of the disorder.

PubMed Health is a government website which means the information originates from a governmental department and is edited and controlled by them. The information was reviewed very recently and there are scholarly references at the end of the page. This website seems like it is fairly reliable. It may be a good starting point for someone who is seeking general information on Anorexia Nervosa. It does not, however, provide much detail regarding the diagnosis or treatment, or links to gain more information.

3. WebMD (2011): *Anorexia Nervosa- Topic Overview*.  
<http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/anorexia-nervosa/anorexia-nervosa-topic-overview>

WebMD is a popular, commercial website that offers signs and symptoms of physical and mental health diagnosis. The page begins with the subject, “Is this topic for you?” It explains that Anorexia Nervosa is only one type of eating disorder and it lists links for Bulimia Nervosa and Binge Eating Disorder. It goes on to explain the signs, symptoms and causes of Anorexia Nervosa. The second page

explains what would happen if a doctor suspected that a person suffered from the disorder or if an individual goes in to the doctor to get help. It also explains what treatment looks like and the type of professionals who work with people with this disorder (i.e. doctor, dietician, and counselor).

WebMD provides accurate and detailed information about Anorexia Nervosa. It is operated by a team of staff, most of which identify themselves as Doctors of Medicine (MD). The best part of the website is that throughout its description, it allows for the viewer to click on words that link to further information about that specific topic. For example, some words include eating disorder, body image, mental health, depression, and anxiety. At the end of the second page it provides more links to frequently asked questions and articles surrounding the topic. Although WebMD should not be used to replace the DSM-IV criteria or a clinician's opinion, it does offer a lot of helpful information regarding Anorexia Nervosa.

4. Pretty Thin: The world's largest eating disorder community and forum (2012). *Pro-Ana*.  
<http://www.prettythin.com>

When typing in "Anorexia" or "Anorexia Nervosa" in to the Google search engine, the bottom of the page makes available links to searches that are related to the original topic. Some of these links include: pro-ana, anorexia tips, and pro-anorexia. The website claims it neither condemns nor encourages eating disorders, but provides support for individuals with eating disorders no matter what their relationship is to it; this concept is known as Pro-Anorectic, or Pro-Ana. Members of Pretty Thin can create a profile, make friends, participate in forums, and share pictures and stories with each other.

At first glance, this website appears to promote Anorexia. There are several pictures of thin women and discussion about dieting and losing weight. After more thoroughly reviewing Pretty Thin, it appears as if there is a wide range of support that exists from encouraging eating disorders to promoting recovery. The website was made by a man who does not suffer from an eating disorder and does not seem to have any type of credentials that would suggest expertise on the topic. Although there is information regarding recovery, this website could potentially be very harmful to a person suffering from Anorexia Nervosa. Due to the nature of the disorder, these individuals tend to deny the severity of the disorder and are often resistant to recovery. For some, this website may help reinforce and support their eating disorder.

5. House of Thin (2010). *Pro-Ana*.  
<http://www.houseofthin.com>

The House of Thin website can be found by typing "Pro-Ana" in to the Google Search engine. This website is similar to Pretty Thin but it claims to be an evolutionized version of pro-ana. To view the forums, browsers of this site must become members. The website explains that it is different than other sites because it allows members to lock themselves in and out of certain categories. For example, if a person who is suffering from Bulimia (Mia) feels it is detrimental to his/her recovery to have access to the forums focused on Anorexia, he/she can block those forums to make them inaccessible. Along with the forums, The House of Thin offers several links to information on specific eating disorder descriptions and dangers; the Pro-Ana revolution, myths, and statistics; BMI and BMR calculators; and articles on being thin.

The House of Thin is a commercial website run by an individual who claims to be the “premier transsexual entertainer model escort.” Browsers can click on a link to her personal website. Like Pretty Thin, and other Pro-Ana websites, The House of Thin could be extremely damaging to individuals diagnosed with Anorexia Nervosa. Although these website claim they do not promote Anorexia Nervosa, many of the articles and bloggers tend to do so.