

EATING DISORDERS

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Abstract: *We all differ in what we like to eat, the amount we eat and when or how often to eat. Food becomes a problem when it is used to cope with painful feelings and emotions. Today our society promotes the ideals of slim bodies and the models are taken as role models of success. In order to look good, they practice abnormal pattern of eating. Such problems have a devastating impact on day-to-day lives of million people and they can cause a wide range of serious medical problems.*

Key words: *Anorexia, Bulimia, Binge eating, osteoporosis, heart attack, eating disorder, nutrition.*

An eating disorder is a psychological disorder that is characterized by abnormal eating habits and a distorted view of one's body. Eating disorders usually involve a degree of body dysmorphic disorder – a negative distortion of how an individual sees himself or herself. There may be a combination of factors that contribute to this problem, like: low self-esteem, genetics, culture, etc.

Anorexia nervosa happens when one is obsessed with becoming thin that they reach extreme measures and this leads to extreme weight loss. Symptoms: dramatic weight loss; refusal to eat certain foods or food categories; excessive and rigid exercise routine; withdrawal from usual friends/relative; muscles become weak and wasted; hair, nails and skin become dry and brittle; problems with the bones (osteoporosis). The Anorexia Nervosa is at least 10 times more frequent in women than in men. The incidence of Anorexia Nervosa appears to have increased in recent decades. Binge eating disorder is characterized by feelings of a loss of control of food intake and overeating. Eating large volumes of food over short periods can place significant stress on the body's digestive system. During such binges, a person rapidly consumes an excessive quantity of food. Binge eating disorder is much like bulimia except the individuals do not use any form of purging (i.e. vomiting, laxatives, fasting, etc.) following a binge. Symptoms: anxiety, including feelings of shame and guilt, heart disease and heart attack, risk of diabetes, problems with bones (osteoporosis).

Bulimia nervosa, also known as simply bulimia, is an eating disorder characterized by binge eating followed by purging. People with bulimia may secretly binge — eating large amounts of food with a loss of control over the eating — and then purge, trying to get rid of the extra calories in an unhealthy way. Symptoms: sensitive teeth, tooth erosion and decay, stomach pain and ulceration, living in fear of gaining weight, forcing yourself to vomit or exercising too much to keep from gaining weight after bingeing.

Foods, that can be consumed rapidly, especially sweets such as ice cream and cake, are usually part of a binge. A recent study found that women with bulimia nervosa were more likely to binge while alone and during the morning or afternoon. Girls and women are ten times more likely than boys and men to suffer from anorexia or bulimia. Research carried out that the average length of time that someone suffers with such problems is eight and five years respectively. The right treatment approach for each person depends on his or her specific symptoms, issues, and strengths, as well as the severity of the disorder. To be most effective, the treatment for an eating disorder must address both the physical and psychological aspects of the problem: medical treatment and psychological counseling. *Tips how to deal with such problems:* set a positive example, encourage eating with natural consequences, do not blame yourself, avoid power struggles over food, take care of yourself., listen to your feelings, listen to your body, accept and love yourself.

In conclusion, I would like to say that an eating disorder is not a normal lifestyle. It is a serious, life threatening condition, which can lead to damaging consequences: mentally, emotionally and physically. These problems are often hidden, kept as a secret because of fear and judgment. They are, however, treatable and there are many organizations, which are ready to provide their help, everything that you need to do is your desire.

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