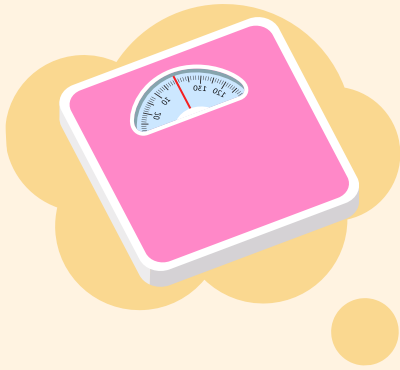


# EATING

# Disorder



# 06

# EATING DISORDER

When you become so preoccupied with food and weight issues that you find it harder and harder to focus on other aspects of your life, it may be an early sign of an eating disorder. Without treatment, eating disorders can take over a person's life and lead to serious, potentially fatal medical complications. Eating disorders can affect people of any age or gender, but rates are higher among women. Symptoms commonly appear in adolescence and young adulthood.

## SYMPTOMS

Eating disorders are a group of related conditions that cause serious emotional and physical problems. Each condition involves extreme food and weight issues; however, each has unique symptoms that separate it from the others.

## TYPES OF EATING DISORDER

- Anorexia Nervosa
- Bulimia Nervosa
- Binge Eating Disorder (BED)

## Anorexia Nervosa

People with anorexia will deny themselves food to the point of self-starvation as they obsess about weight loss. With anorexia, a person will deny hunger and refuse to eat, practise binge eating and purging behaviours or exercise to the point of exhaustion as they attempt to limit, eliminate or “burn” calories.

Some people with anorexia might also use binge eating and purge behaviours, while others only restrict eating.

### **Emotional symptoms:**

- irritability
- social withdrawal
- lack of mood or emotion
- not being able to understand the seriousness of the situation
- fear of eating in public and obsessions with food and exercise

Often food rituals are developed or whole categories of food are eliminated from the person’s diet, out of fear of being “fat”.

Anorexia can take a heavy physical toll. Very low food intake and inadequate nutrition causes a person to become very thin. The body is forced to slow down to conserve energy causing:

### **Physical symptoms:**

- irregularities or loss of menstruation
- constipation and abdominal pain
- irregular heart rhythms, low blood pressure
- dehydration
- trouble sleeping

## Bulimia Nervosa

People living with bulimia will feel out of control when bingeing on very large amounts of food during short periods of time, and then desperately try to rid themselves of the extra calories using forced vomiting, abusing laxatives or excessive exercise.

This becomes a repeating cycle that controls many aspects of the person's life and has a very negative effect both emotionally and physically. People living with bulimia are usually normal weight or even a bit overweight.

### **Emotional symptoms:**

- low self-esteem overly linked to body image
- feelings of being out of control
- feeling guilty or shameful about eating
- withdrawal from friends and family.

Like anorexia, bulimia will inflict physical damage

### **Physical symptoms:**

- severely harm the parts of the body involved in eating and digesting food
- damaged teeth by frequent vomiting
- acid reflux
- dehydration
- prone to cardiac arrhythmias, heart failure and even death.

## Binge Eating Disorder (BED)

A person with BED loses control over their eating and eats a very large amount of food in a short period of time. They may also eat large amounts of food even when he isn't hungry or after he is uncomfortably full. This causes them to feel embarrassed, disgusted, depressed or guilty about their behaviour. A person with BED, after an episode of binge eating, does not attempt to purge or exercise excessively like someone living with anorexia or bulimia would. A person with binge eating disorder may be normal weight, overweight or obese.