

# The american psychiatric association

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Bulimia is an eating disorder and people affected by bulimia are abnormally self conscious and worry excessively about their physical appearance and weight. Their paranoid concern causes to consume excessive amounts of food in short periods of time. Moreover, such people indulge in self induced vomiting, abuse of diuretics and excessive exercise in order to reduce their weight. The American Psychiatric Association classified the bulimia disorder as a unique disorder of its class in the year 1980. Subsequently in 1987 it changed the name of this disorder to bulimia nervosa.

Occasionally the characteristics of bulimia are found in cases of persons suffering from anorexia nervosa. Abnormal dieting patterns are the primary behavioral symptoms found among patients suffering from anorexia nervosa; however, the extensive loss of weight cannot be attributed to bulimia. It has been observed that Bulimia causes gastrointestinal disorders and severe depletion of potassium in the human body. The process of self induced vomiting results in the damage of the teeth enamel, due to the acidic nature of the vomited food.

Adolescents are the primary targets of bulimia disorder, because they undergo severe psychological depression if they are overweight (Bulimia, 2005). Bulimia causes dehydration, malnutrition and mineral imbalances. Insufficient and irregular supply of minerals and fluids may cause damage to brain cells, muscles, reproductive tract, bowels, stomach and other organs of the body. Sometimes severe heart problems may also result from bulimia and some of these problems are arrhythmias, congestive heart failure and sudden death.

Moreover, repeated vomiting results in damage to the throat and esophagus, furthermore, it has been observed that individuals who indulge in self induced vomiting are backward in their academic career (Reyes, 2006). According to medical history, cases of illness due to bulimia had not been reported before 1980. Subsequent researchers noticed that there were a considerable number of people who were accustomed to eating large quantities of food within a short period of time.

Moreover, these people being unable to withstand the excessive gain of body weight were in the habit of adopting methods of self induced vomiting in order to control their weight. The name bulimia is used to describe the eating patterns of overweight people and to describe their episodes of overindulgence in eating food. After such episodes of overeating, bulimics attempt to get rid of the extra calories imbibed by them by consuming laxatives. Some bulimics engage in excessive exercise and abstention of food for long periods of time.

Subsequent to the end of the fast period bulimics consume large amounts of food, which would cause a rupture of the stomach. Vomiting the consumed food could cause chemical imbalance in the body. Bulimarexia is the term used to describe people of low body weight who overindulge in eating and then get rid of the food eaten by consuming laxatives or by self induced vomiting (The Medical Complications of Bulimia). The oligomenorrhea in patients with bulimia affects bone mineral density, however, weight-bearing exercises could prove to be beneficial.

Thus the ever present danger of osteoporosis could be reduced to an appreciable extent by resorting to regular exercise (Bulimia Nervosa ).

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Several studies have determined that people with eating disorders have weak bone and suffer from osteoporosis due to inadequate nutrition. Persons suffering from such eating disorders had twice the risk of suffering from osteoporosis and fractures of the bones. Moreover, such eating disorders result in malnutrition for prolonged periods of time and this brings about a gradual erosion of the bone mass and continued nutritional deficits.

Eating disorders, therefore present an enhanced risk of bone fractures due to the damage caused to the human skeleton (Goebel, Schweiger, & Kruger, 2002). Consequences of bulimia include the disturbance of the vital chemical balance of the body fluids and the electrolyte balance. The potassium and calcium levels in the body are drastically depleted due to self induced vomiting and the abuse of laxatives. The vicious cycle of overindulgence in food and subsequent use of laxatives or self induced vomiting results in heart problems, damage to the kidneys and the brain and osteoporosis.

Other contraindications are fatigue, depression, sore muscles, faintness, over sensitivity to cold and a susceptibility to gain weight. These symptoms are most common in bulimics as their blood glucose level fluctuates constantly due to overeating food containing carbohydrates (The Medical Complications of Bulimia). Furthermore, vomiting disturbs the intricate message system that aids a person to stop eating at the appropriate time. Frequent self induced vomiting confuses the brain in properly maintaining the responsive system and this causes the brain to fail to ascertain whether the food consumed is to be retained or not.

Such confusion of the brain's activity results in perpetual eating habits. Vomiting food restricts the serotonin levels of the brain and these levels are

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associated with the positive states of brain and help the person to be in a happy mood. Self induced vomiting and the abuse of laxatives results in the irritation of the gastrointestinal tract and this irritation could prove to be fatal in later stages. Excessive eating and subsequent induced vomiting cause swollen salivary glands and erosion of the enamel of the teeth.

Vomiting causes a sore throat that leads to severe bleeding of the esophagus. (The Medical Complications of Bulimia). The functionality of the stomach is seriously impaired and the abuse of laxative drugs causes permanent damage to the lining of the bowels affecting their normal functioning. Thus people who abuse laxatives develop problems like the bloating of the stomach, constipation and diarrhea in the long run (The Medical Complications of Bulimia).

Moreover, bulimia has several deleterious effects on the human body like frequent weight changes, poor skin condition, hair loss, irregularity in menstruation periods, loss of libido, tiredness and lethargy, and increased risk of heart related problems and the danger of a heart attack (What is Bulimia Nervosa? ). References Bulimia. (2005). Microsoft® Encarta® 2006 [DVD] . Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation. Bulimia Nervosa . (n. d. ). Retrieved June 27, 2007, from [http://www. healthyplace. com/Communities/Eating\\_Disorders/women\\_6. asp](http://www.healthyplace.com/Communities/Eating_Disorders/women_6.asp) Goebel, G. , Schweiger, U. , & Kruger, R. (2002).

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