

The bulimic body

Business



For some, it's a stress reliever, a way of control, and a way to look as though you're living a normal life but still lose weight.

Many people, young and old, man and woman, are affected by this disease.

What is this strange problem that is suddenly spiraling out of control?

Bulimia, the process of "disposing" calories in an unhealthy manner, is a serious issue in the world that we live in. The question is, do we really understand this disease that spreads so quickly? Do we know the affects, triggers, and symptoms? Chapter 1: What is Bulimia? There are multiple kinds of Bulimia, and contrary to popular belief, not all include purging, "making yourself purposely throw up". However, purging is the most common method used by those affected. This is when a bulimic overeats to the point of where they feel sick. As much as 3,000- 5,000 calories may be consumed in under an hour (Helpguide.

org). After this binge is over, the person is consumed by guilt and anger for eating this much food. They then have to find a quick way of disposing the food; their answer is purging. This type of Bulimia typically occurs if a person is trying to diet, fast, or lose weight. Another form of Bulimia is when a person overeats and takes laxatives, enemas, or diuretics to dispose of the food quickly.

However, according to HelpGuide. org, these ways of disposal are not completely useful to getting rid of calories. "Vomiting after eating will only eliminate 50% of the calories consumed at best- and usually much less... Laxatives get rid of only 10% of the calories eaten, and diuretics do nothing at all.

... that lower number on the scale is water loss, not true weight loss”

(HelpGuide. org).

The last two types of Bulimia are excessive exercise or crash diets following overeating. Excessive exercise means that after you overeat or eat something you don't approve of, you feel the urge to exercise. Crash dieting is just another form of fasting, or going days without food or certain types of foods. This can cause multiple problems with your brain and your body overall, especially with your heart and other organs. When your body is unnourished, your body's immediate reaction is to protect the heart. The heart is the most important part of the body, and if it isn't getting enough of the materials it needs, the body will start to shut down and eliminate the organs that are considered “ unimportant.

” This can take great effects on your heart, which need those organs to function correctly. Organs such as the kidney and the liver, which are used as filtering systems, are probably going to be the first organs eliminated. This is not good for your heart because your kidneys help remove the waste materials from your blood. If the waste is not being removed from your blood, then your heart is taking in waste. The waste builds up in your heart and arteries and causes them to become clogged. Crash dieting causes the brain to become low on materials as they are being used by the heart.

This can cause the brain to shut down or kill off important brain cells, causing fainting, passing out, and, in extreme cases, dying. But how can you tell if someone you love or know has this difficult disease? Chapter 2: The Side Effects and Signs of Bulimia Have you ever been over a friends house

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and seen their pantry and fridge stocked high with food? However, they live on their own and are a normal healthy weight. This might be one of the many signs of Bulimia. Along with purchases of large food amounts, there are many other signs that help outsiders catch a person with Bulimia. Bulimic people are very conscious about who they confide in and how they hide their problem. To help you catch on, here are some signs that you should look for in a person.

If you happen to be at somebody's house, and you suspect that they are Bulimic, check their food cabinets. If they are full, take note of that. Bulimics often tend to purchase large quantities of soft, cold, and easy to get foods. Also check to see the amount of water that they drink. When a person purges, or take laxatives, they lose large quantities of water.

Water is also a substitute for food, since it fills you up but doesn't contain any calories. Don't bother with trying to catch them not eating. Bulimics feel the need to eat to look normal. Afterwards, they will go to the bathroom and try to purge their meal. Oftentimes, they try to drown the sound out with music or running water.

If you visit the bathroom after, there might be a lurking smell of vomit or perfume in the air. As with any other disease, Bulimics tend to have behavioral changes. People with Bulimia tend to feel ashamed of what they do; they do not want anyone to know what they are doing. That is why they hide, and become quieter, or more distant. They start to recoil from friends and become more secretive.

You might also note their temper and mood that they are in at certain points. One example is when someone mentions weight or eating disorders. The Bulimic might become very nervous or very distant. If you are a person they confide in, and try to talk to them or try to help them, they could become angry or defensive. This is because they probably thought that you would agree with their decisions, or just let it go. They feel that what they do is their own lifestyle and that if they change it, they will lose their way and become out of control.

Other than visual signs, there are also some side effects that can occur. Some side effects can affect you more drastically than others. Side effects such as broken blood vessels under the eyes, yellowing teeth, and deep eye sockets are all signs of Bulimia. These are caused by the purging type of Bulimic. Broken blood vessels occur because of the enormous amount of pressure that is put on the blood vessels in the eyes (and behind them) when you purge. Yellowing teeth occur from the acid in the vomit, which erode the tooth enamel, and cause the teeth to become clear and yellow.

Deep eye sockets are a result of lack of food to the body. This means that in order to get food and nutrients, the body eats any fat and muscle that it can find. Also, scarred knuckles and callused hands are result of the acid the hands were exposed to. The skin on your hands isn't meant to be exposed to your stomach acid- the skin is too soft and can not resist the eroding acid. Serious side effects include weakness, from lack of nutrition, ulcers, from acid reflex, and ruptured stomach or esophagus, from excessive vomiting, and constipation from too much laxative use. Chapter 3: Why Does Bulimia Affect People? According to the British Medical Journal, " There are now 12, <https://assignbuster.com/the-bulimic-body/>

400 new cases in people aged between 10 and 49 every 12 months” for Anorexia and Bulimia (Mirror News.

co. uk). That means if each of those cases does not get help in the next four years, about 49, 600 people will have Bulimia or Anorexia. Perhaps we can try to stop this number from growing in the next few years. Unfortunately, there is one problem: there is more than one reason that people become Bulimic. Maybe it's because they feel unperfect, or perhaps they have anxiety problems.

Sometimes it's just because they have a phobia of becoming fat but they like food too much to give it up. However, the problem is not the disease itself, the problem lies in the person's brain. Everybody knows that certain parts of your brain control certain parts of your body, and everybody knows that your brain produces important hormones that control your feelings and your need to eat. So, what would happen if a part of your brain was producing too much of a hormone? This is what causes some people to turn Bulimic. “. .

. This study confirms earlier studies by our group and others that establish a clear link between these disorders and neural processes in the insula, an area of the brain where taste is sensed and integrated with reward to help determine whether an individual hungry or full' says Kaye, director of the UCSD Eating Disorders Treatment and Research Program” What Kaye is trying to explain is that there is a certain part of your brain, called the insula, that specially functions to sense when you stomach is full and empty. If your insula is not working correctly, then your brain cannot receive, or sense, the signals telling you that your stomach is full. This is why Bulimic victims are

not able to stop eating until they are over-stuffed. However, this is not the one and only factor that can lead to Bulimia.

Like any other human, you oftentimes feel insecure about the way you look, what people think of you, and how good you are at certain activities. This is okay because you only think about these things for a few days. For bulimics, these insecurities are much worse. They can drown in their own thoughts and feel out of control and lost, and sometimes, they can't resurface. These insecurities can come about due to many factors.

One of the most common is bullying. Bullying is one of the main reasons that bulimia starts in a person. Once the first insult is made, the seed is planted inside the victim. The victim starts to become aware of his, or her, insecurities. They start to feel imperfect, silently drowning in their insecurities.

Feeling like a burden, they don't tell anybody about what they are facing. That is when they try to "fix" themselves but, at the same time, they cannot resist the temptation of food. Coming to the conclusion that they will eat to look normal, they end up purging the substance back up, exercising drastically, or crash dieting afterwards. They go to extremes to make sure that they look normal, while staying at their "goal" weight. They might be ashamed of what they do to get to that goal, but they will never stop.

This is because they have fears of becoming fat. Bulimics are scared that nobody will want to be friends with them because they are too "heavy." This fear is called Obesophobia and is a serious problem that can drive people to eating disorders. Anxiety is another one of the many factors that can push a
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person to become a Bulimic. Pressure can lead a person to do many things, especially if that person is starting to feel out of control.

Anxiety can lead them to feel the need to overeat and then result in the purge afterwards. This is because they feel so much stress put on them and have no idea how to get rid of it. Have you ever heard the term, "Chocolate is the best comfort food"? When a Bulimic is stressed, they find food very comforting. They soon realize that eating food is relieving their stress, which causes them to eat even more. Afterwards, they feel guilty for eating so much food, and end up purging. This can start to become a habit, otherwise known as a cycle.

Due to the three main types of Bulimia, there are many different types of cycles that a person can go through. Chapter 4: How Does the Media Affect Bulimia? One day, try searching BuliMia onGoogle. You may find lots of results on what this disease is and how to stop it, but at the bottom you may find a chilling discovery: sites promoting BuliMia, otherwise know as pro Mia sites . These sites are becoming very popular in countries, in particular, England.

These websites are made, most of the time, by Bulimics themselves who are looking for more people like them. These pages can be quite disturbing, supporting tips on how to binge, certain food to eat, and inspirational quotes. These sites also endorse "thinspiration." "Thinspiration" is an image, or collage of images, of what a person hopes to look like someday. The problem is that most of these photos have been technologically altered to make the model look "appealing."

" Since almost every young child and adult has access to the internet, it is almost impossible to prevent people from seeing these sites. " Thinspiration" does not always have to be of specially edited models. Sometime, actors and actresses can be used as well. This is one of the ways that people were originally exposed to BuliMia, by actresses that had previously, or presently, had a battle with an eating disorder. One of the first actresses that put a spotlight on the issue of eating disorders was Karen Carpenter. As a young singer, Carpenter had, what most of us would call, " the life.

" But did " the life" have a catch? At the age of 32, Carpenter was found on the floor of her closet by her mother. Her brother shares the tragic memory of that day: " Mom was so hysterical I could barely understand what she said. As soon as I could grasp what had happened, I tore out of here and drove to my parents', just a few miles away. I arrived just as Karen was being brought out of the house on a stretcher" According to Social Barrel, an online news source: "...

more and more research now point to media's role in giving a social background for developing eating disorders, and also being a contributory factor to the continuation of these disorders. ...(They) promote and encourage bad eating habits which are related to eating disorders. .

.. using social networking sites...

promote and encourage bad eating habits which are related to eating disorders" (2). Although the government has been trying to shut these sites down for years, they are having a battle with them. This is due to the constant activity on the world wide web. The government can take down <https://assignbuster.com/the-bulimic-body/>

many sites a day, but they will be replaced by thousands of pro Mia sites in a matter of days. Most solutions that are being offered say that the government should keep a closer eye on these sites, eliminating them as soon as they pop up.

That way, eventually, the message will become clear. However, as much as these sites pose a threat to humanities health, they also are very helpful to lonely Bulimics who have no one to talk to. These sites sometimes can stand as the only support system for a Bulimic. Bulimics are afraid to tell anyone else for fear that they will be coddled or punished, so instead, they go to a pro Mia website and blog about their problems. Sometimes though, they don't just stop with their problems, they share their weight, how to purge, and easy purgable foods.

It's a vicious cycle. Additionally, teen fashion magazines are also very influential to a teen with low self esteem issues. In today society, models are photoshopped; they can have a photo taken and the original has no comparison to the product. Despite this, some people think that the models look like that naturally, and do all they can to look like these models. However, this is not a true statement.

It is almost impossible to look like these "fake" photos. Besides, if you did manage to look like them, the results probably wouldn't be too kind to your insides and would cause many problems later in life. These magazines can take effect especially on younger girls and boys. 42% of girls in first through third grade already desire to be thinner This is the first sign of the problem that shows up early in life. From there, they just get worse.

50% of girls in their teens outrule the 33% of teen boys that purge, smoke, fast, and skip meals, just to lose weight 3) According to Neal Alfie Lasta from Social Barrel, " Social media is particularly harmful to teenagers because 90 percent of them are using social networking sites, which are filled with online groups that promote and encourage bad eating habits which are related to eating disorders" (4). This clearly proves that BuliMia is everywhere in the world, from books, to school, and even online. This is why it is so hard to keep these horrible problems away from children. Chapter 5: How Do Bulimics Do It? You may be wondering what " easy purgeable foods" are. These foods consist of cold foods such as ice cream, or soft foods, such as applesauce or fruits.

Bulimics tend to try and avoid eating starches and nutty food because they tend to be harder, and hurt more on the way back up. The only problem is that during a binge, as long as you're eating, you don't really care what it is. Another technique used by Bulimics is chewing food until it is mushy. This way they can avoid big chunks getting stuck in their throat. You may also be wondering about how Bulimics manage to get the food back up. There are many ways to make a person purge, some, more harmless than others.

There are about six or more ways to purge, or dispose of the calories: Ipecac Syrup, Two Finger, Crash Dieting, Over Exercising, taking laxatives or medication, and drinking mixed solutions. While none of them are harmless, some are much worse than others. One extremely dangerous way that a Bulimic can make themselves purge is by drinking Ipecac syrup. Ipecac syrup, now banned because of substance abuse, used to be used to relieve

an upset stomach. Ipecac is a violent toxin that is rejected by the stomach due to irritation, making the person empty of the materials inside them.

According to Healthwise Staff from emedicinehealth.com, " If this product is abused or if too much of it is absorbed into the body, it can cause serious heart problems, such as cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation, or myocarditis, all of which can lead to death" (1). Substance abuse and eating disorders have been proven to cause more deaths than suicide and medical complications. This just goes to show how bad these problems really are, considering that every year nearly 30, 000 people end up committing suicide (save.org).

So, where can we find this disease in present day? Chapter 6: It's Not Only Females That Are Affected... Many people associate the word with Bulimia with females, mostly models. However, this is not true. Bulimia affects a wide variety of people, men and women.

Although it may be hard to believe, men have insecurities as well. They are just as self conscious around other males as girls are around other females. While there are many similarities between male and female Bulimics, males oftentimes have different methods when it comes to Bulimia. Most boys will succumb to excessive exercise to lose weight, weighing themselves and measuring their body fat percentage . Boys are also more susceptible to laxative abuse and diuretics than girls. Another difference is the areas in which males want to be " perfect.

" These parts include thighs, glutes, and stomach. This " perfect" image is the result, similar to young girls and women, of the media today. If you take a look in a magazine today, you probably won't find many, or any, unfit
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males; you will only see handsome men with a chiseled six pack. However, just as with females, these models have been photoshopped, distorting the image of perfect in these young males minds. There are various signs of Bulimia in males.

One day, you might have a star athlete inside and out, and the next, he is missing passes, dropping the ball, and tripping over his feet. This may not just be your player having an "off" day or becoming distracted; this lack of enthusiasm could be a sign of exhaustion from malnutrition. Other signs that can occur in male Bulimics are: slight gender confusion, the need to be in control, trouble making decisions, depression, feeling of worthlessness, isolation (socially), and obesophobia. What Triggers A Reoccurrence of Bulimia? It can happen anywhere- the mall, a drug store, on a date. That one little memory and everything you have worked so hard to stop, was for nothing, and your back to square one.

A trigger is a "anything, as an act or event, that serves as a stimulus and initiates or precipitates a reaction or series of reactions" (Dictionary. com 1). Triggers can start and restart Bulimia in a person. Some of the most typical types of triggers are: life changing events (e. g rape, death in the family, divorce, car accidents, suicide), stress, bullying, depression, and obesophobia. Luckily there are ways you can stay away from triggers.

"...you may need to avoid looking at fashion or fitness magazines, spend less time with friends who constantly diet and talk about losing weight, and stay away from weight loss web sites and 'pro-mia' sites that promote bulimia.

You may also need to be careful when it comes to meal planning and cooking magazines and shows” (Helpguide.

org 4). Let’s say you became a Bulimic after you had a traumatic break up with your partner, and you finally managed to just get your life back together. Everything was going well for you; you even met someone! Until you went on your first date, everything was perfectly fine... and then they started to laugh.

That’s when you fell apart all over again. Their dimples, smiles, and the way they moved their head all reminded you of your ex. Triggers like this are harder to avoid, unless you are extremely cautious of what you do, where you go, and who you see. For example, it might be a bad example for a Bulimic to visit an old drug store they used to buy laxatives from. Another good thing to do for a past Bulimic is avoid anyone who doesn’t accept you for who you are or what you look like. If the Bulimic does relapse, they need to get help right away.

Chapter 7: How to Recover From Bulimia The best thing for a Bulimic to do when they want to recover is admit that they need help. Even though they are perfectly happy living like they are, they obviously aren’t if they want help. They also need to talk to someone, whether it’s a parent, teacher, or just a friend. This can be a helpful solution for the Bulimic, as they may not want to let everyone know right away or see a therapist. Someone in recovery must also stay away from triggers and seek help from a professional therapist.

If you are trying to help a loved one recover from Bulimia, the best thing to do is not overpower them. Helpguide. org states, “ As a parent or friend, there isn’t a lot you can do to ‘ fix’ your loved one’s bulimia. The person with bulimia must make the decision to move forward” (5). Another thing you can do to help your loved one is to show them comfort.

The worst possible thing for you to do is become angry or ashamed of them. It takes a lot of courage for a person to talk about their problems. Instead, you should become a role model. Don’t talk about you weight shape or figure around them. Another important rule to stand by is that you should never cause them to feel guilty. They will feel as though it was their fault and possibly relapse.

Lastly, you should see a therapist on your own time to receive a healthy support system on your end. There can be a lot of stress that comes with trying to helps someone that is Bulimic. Remember: you are not the only one who can help. There are many websites, hotlines, and articles that will gladly help a Bulimic. One Hotline is from NEDA, or the National Eating Disorders Association. The number is 1-800-931-2237.

There is also an artical by Helpguide. org on how to get help for recovery.