

Condition:



Eating Disorders

Binge-eating

Covered in this fact sheet

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What is Binge-eating?

Eating disorders are illnesses in which the people experience severe disturbances in their eating behaviours and related thoughts and emotions. People with eating disorders typically become pre-occupied with food and their body weight.

In many cases, eating disorders may occur together with other psychiatric disorders like anxiety, panic, obsessive compulsive disorder, alcohol and drug abuse problems and body dysmorphic.

Binge-eating Disorder

People with binge-eating disorder lose control over their eating. Unlike bulimia nervosa, periods of binge-eating are not followed by purging, excessive exercise, or fasting. As a result, people with binge-eating disorder often are overweight or obese.

Binge-eating and work

Binge eating in itself is not a barrier to work however it is can be a psychological or emotional response to stress or low moods.

Some common stressful factors may be:

- Pressure of deadlines
- Not meeting work objectives or targets
- Feeling bullied or harassed at work
- Not having a social network of friends or friendly colleague's
- Feeling persecuted or discriminated by employer

It is recommended that you read through the self-management and self-care part of this worksheet to help develop more positive coping strategies to emotional distress whether this is at work or in your home/personal life.

How do I know if I have Binge-eating Disorder



Causes of Binge-eating Disorder

Binge eating is associated with many different factors. This does not mean that any of these things have caused the problem. Important factors include:

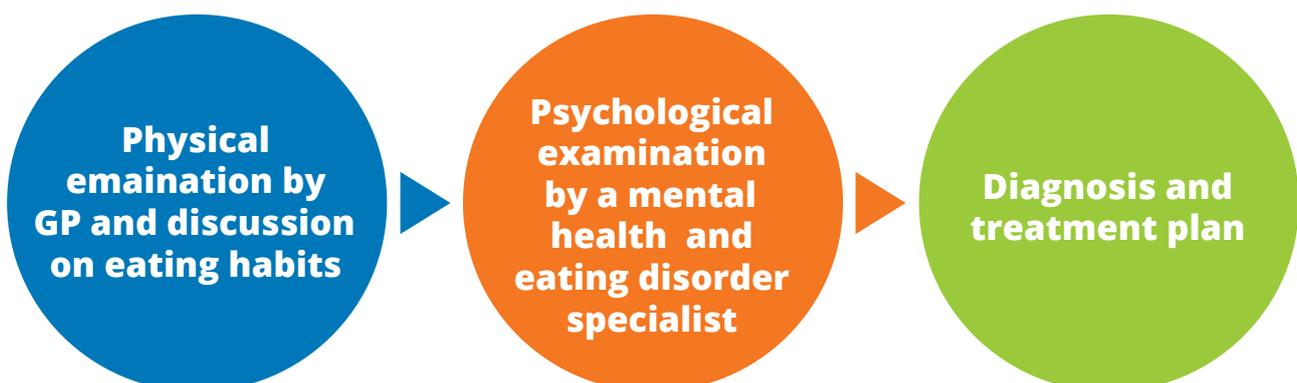
- Control - losing weight can make someone feel good and in control.
- Longstanding unhappiness which may show itself through eating.
- Puberty - anorexia reverses some of the physical changes of puberty. You can see it as putting off some of the challenges of becoming an adult.
- Family - saying "no" to food may be the only way you can express your feelings.
- Depression - binges may start off as a way of coping with unhappiness.
- Low self-esteem.
- Social pressure - Western culture, particularly the media, idealises being thin.
- Genetics may play a part.

Talking to your GP/Health professional

Doctors will use physical and psychological evaluations to diagnose Binge Eating Disorder. They'll also make sure that you meets the diagnostic criteria for an eating disorder but will not diagnose binge eating disorder solely based on a physical exam. A psychological evaluation by a mental health specialist is also required.

A mental health specialist will ask questions about eating habits. The goal is to understand the patient's attitude toward food and eating. The doctor also needs to get an idea of how the patient perceives their body.

The questions can be personal, especially when talking about dieting, bingeing, purging, or extreme exercise habits.



Treatments

Self-care and self-management

NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) recommends guided self-help focused specifically on binge eating disorder as the first step. This should use self-help materials based on CBT, and should involve supportive sessions over the course of the programme to help ensure its effectiveness.

Psychotherapy

Group CBT focused on eating disorders.

If group CBT isn't available, or you don't feel that it is suited to you, individual CBT focused on eating disorders may be offered.

Eating advice

From a Nutritionist this helps you to get back to regular eating, healthy eating patterns.

Medication

Antidepressants can reduce the urge to binge. Unfortunately, without the other forms of help, the benefits wear off after a while.

Self-Management

There are some things you can do alongside medical treatment that can boost your mood. They can also help to distract you and look after your general health.



Take notice

Try to be more mindful of your surroundings and what you are doing and experiencing as this may help to reduce your negative behaviours.



Connect

As mentioned above don't go it alone – talk and connect with other people even when you feel low. Being around others can act as a protective mechanism as well.



Be Active

Exercise is evidenced to improve our moods so get out and about even if it is just a short walk to the local shop.



Give Back

Giving even when you feel very low can benefit you and others - give something back into the community or to people around you. For example get involved in a local project.



Keep learning

Learning something new works as both a distraction and a motivator - try to take opportunities that you have around you to learn something new and develop on skills that you already have.

Self-care

You can learn to manage your symptoms by looking after yourself. This is called 'self-care.' Self-care is how you manage your daily routine, relationships and how you are feeling. If you have an eating disorder it may help to improve your self-esteem. You could do this by:

- listing your good qualities,
- writing down the things you can do,
- learning a new skill,
- writing down your feelings,
- taking an assertiveness course to help your confidence, or
- writing about your life without an eating disorder.

It may help to think about what sets off your eating patterns. Certain times of year or events may make your eating worse. At those times you can ask for extra support from family or friends. You could try different things to improve how you see your body, such as:

- wearing clothes you feel comfortable in,
- not weighing yourself,
- doing nice things for your body, such as getting a massage or having a bath,
- not reading fashion magazines and comparing yourself.

Useful links

