



Remote
Health



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Course Materials

Do I have an
eating disorder?





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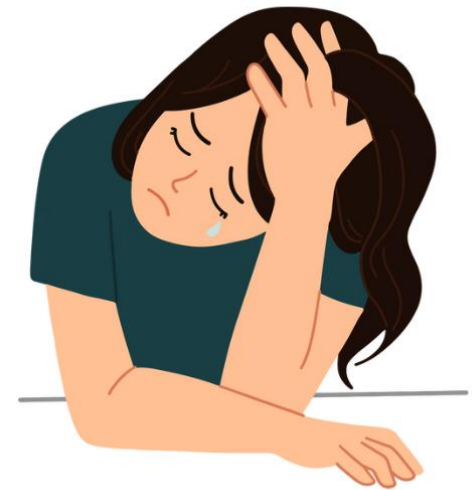
What are eating disorders?





Eating disorders are serious illnesses.

People with eating disorders have serious issues with food and their relationship with their own body.





Someone who occasionally eats too much or has lost a lot of weight does not automatically suffer from an eating disorder. However, these behaviors can be the beginning of an eating disorder if other factors are present.



The transition to pathological behavior is usually gradual. That means that you don't suddenly develop an eating disorder over night.



There are different types of eating disorders:

- ☞ Anorexia
- ☞ Bulimia
- ☞ Binge- eating disorder
- ☞ Atypical eating disorder

These are explained on the next pages.



Anorexia (Anorexia nervosa)





How do I recognize anorexia?

- ☞ Severe weight loss or constant underweight
- ☞ Constant fear of gaining weight
- ☞ Strict control of food intake
- ☞ Excessive physical activity
- ☞ Feeling uncomfortable in your own skin
- ☞ Taking medication or vomiting to continue losing weight
- ☞ Initially feelings of lightness and euphoria, later indifference, depression, anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorders





What are the causes of anorexia?

One thing is not enough - several of these triggers come together to cause anorexia:



- ✦ Hereditary predisposition, disturbed eating behavior in childhood, previous strict dieting behavior
- ✦ low self-esteem, emotional insecurity, strong concern about appearance, figure and weight
- ✦ Slim ideal of beauty
- ✦ Stressful experiences
- ✦ Physical illnesses
- ✦ Physical changes during puberty
- ✦ Competitive sports (sports with a focus on body weight and slimness)



How do you treat anorexia?

The first goals of treatment are:

Relief of acute symptoms, healthy weight gain and development of correct eating habits.

In the second part of the therapy strategies are developed to ensure that you do not return to old behavior patterns after the end of therapy.





In life-threatening situations, compulsory treatment may be necessary . This means that someone is placed in a clinic against their will.

Depending on the severity of the disease, there are different treatments:

- Outpatient, i.e. regularly for one to two hours in a clinic or practice
- Day clinic, i.e. you are in a clinic during the day and go home in the evening
- Inpatient, i.e. you stay several weeks or months in a clinic where you also sleep overnight



It is important that the affected person is not left to their own devices after the clinic stay but continues to receive help from professionals. This is called "aftercare."



Bulimia (Bulimia nervosa)





How do I recognize bulimia?



- ⊕ Binge eating, eating more than usual
- ⊕ Loss of control when eating
- ⊕ Counteracting this by excessive exercise, starvation, fasting, taking medication (e.g. appetite suppressants, laxatives, diuretics) and/or vomiting
- ⊕ Body weight and figure have a strong influence on self-esteem
- ⊕ Body weight is normal or slightly too low (normal to underweight)



What are the causes of bulimia?

Many of the causes of bulimia are common to those of anorexia , so check back on page 9.





How do you treat bulimia?

The first treatment goals are:

Learn to eat normally and find the causes that led to the disease .
In addition, strategies are developed to ensure that you do not return to old behavior patterns after the end of therapy.

Depending on the severity of the disease,
there are different conditions for
treatment.

These correspond to the general conditions
for anorexia. See page 11 again.





Binge eating disorder





How do I recognize binge eating disorder?

- ☞ Binge eating, eating more than usual
- ☞ Loss of control when eating
- ☞ Gobbling down food
- ☞ Eating alone and hiding the binge eating
- ☞ Shame, disgust, depression and feelings of guilt after a binge eating
- ☞ No or only rare counteracting the binge eating through excessive exercise, starvation or vomiting
- ☞ Usually overweight or obese (severe overweight)





What are the causes of binge eating disorder?

One thing is not enough - several of these triggers come together to cause a binge eating disorder:

- ☞ Frequent dieting behavior, high BMI (body mass index)
- ☞ Role models in the family with similar eating habits
- ☞ Little support from others
- ☞ Emotional problems
- ☞ Low self-esteem, dissatisfaction with one's own body, importance of external appearance



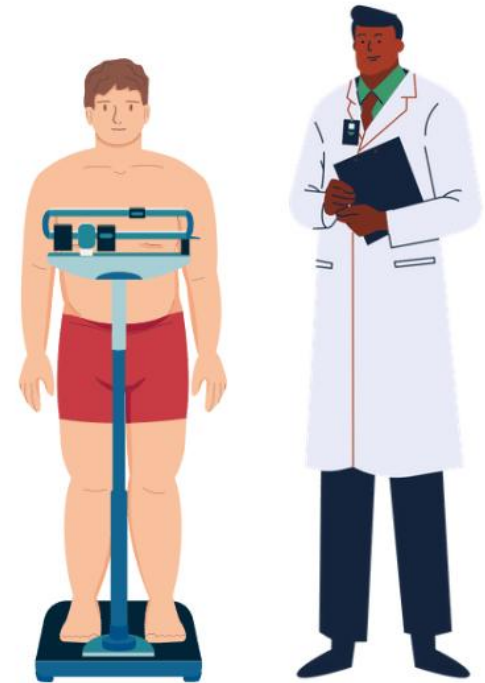


How is binge eating disorder treated?

Treatment involves identifying the triggers and preventing them from occurring. It is also important to learn healthy and regular eating habits. This often helps to lose weight in a healthy way.

Depending on the severity of the disease, there are different conditions for treatment.

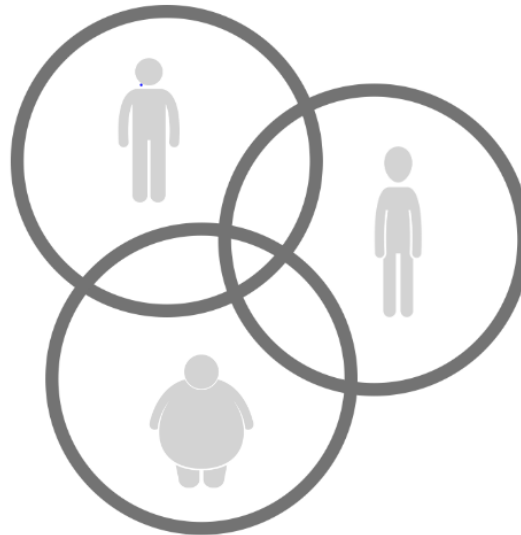
These correspond to the general conditions for anorexia. See page 11 again.



Binge eating disorder



Atypical eating disorders





Atypical eating disorders are the most common. These must also be taken seriously and require professional treatment .

If typical symptoms of eating disorders occur, but the criteria for a specific eating disorder are not met, it is referred to as an atypical eating disorder.





What causes eating disorders?





What you learn in your family

Most children learn their parents' eating habits. But not all parents eat healthily.



In addition, there are bad habits in many families. For example, some parents use food to comfort, reward or calm their children.

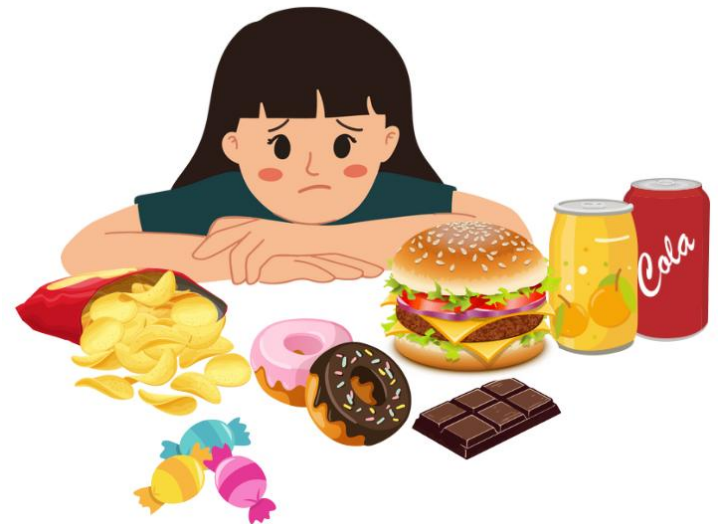


What you learn in your family

Later, when these children are teenagers or adults, they may still use food to comfort or reward themselves, or because they are bored, stressed, or unable to concentrate.

That means they don't eat because they are hungry, but to compensate for negative feelings.

Then they often eat too much or unhealthy things. This can lead to eating disorders such as binge eating disorder or bulimia.





What you learn in your family

In some families there are no regular meal times, people do not eat together or rarely cook themselves.



This means that children cannot learn sensible eating habits or prepare healthy meals for themselves.

This can lead to eating disorders such as binge eating or bulimia.



What you learn in your family

And in other families, excessive emphasis is placed on fitness or good looks.

This can cause children to feel bad if they do not conform to this ideal and are constantly dissatisfied with their bodies.

This can lead to eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia.





Unrealistic expectations and role models

We often look to other people as an ideal, even though they are not very good role models.





Unrealistic expectations and role models

Many celebrities, such as actors, musicians and especially models, do not have "realistic" bodies. That is, they are significantly slimmer or more muscular than an average person.



These people often have to look "special" because their success and career depend on it.



Unrealistic expectations and role models

Sometimes these celebrities themselves have an eating disorder.

But it is much more important to be healthy - because no matter how great your career is, if you are not healthy and do not feel good, you cannot enjoy your life.

So don't compare yourself with people whose success in life depends on their appearance.





Trauma

Another cause of eating disorders can be past trauma.



A "trauma" is a very difficult experience, such as violence or sexual abuse.



Biological causes



Some people have a "predisposition" to certain eating disorders.

This does not mean that they will definitely develop an eating disorder.

But because of their genes, hormones or other physical factors, they are at greater risk of developing an eating disorder.



Do I have an eating disorder?





Your body is developing and puberty is a particularly challenging phase of your life.



It is completely normal and part of this phase that you sometimes don't feel comfortable in your body.



However, if you are not sure whether your eating habits are okay, talk to your parents or another trusted adult, such as a teacher.

Please don't keep your worries and problems to yourself!

You should always see a doctor for a diagnosis. Psychotherapeutic support can also be very useful.





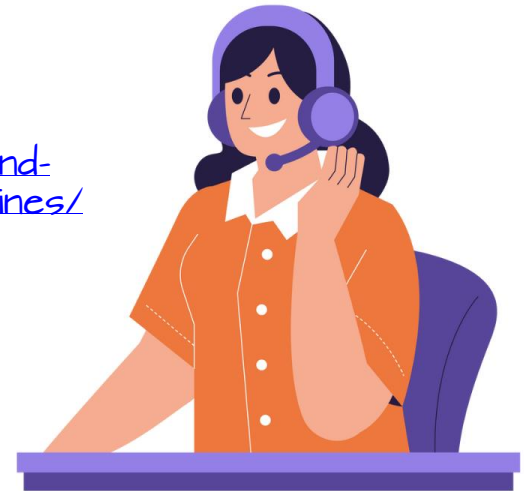
There are also counselling centers or telephone helplines that often offer anonymous advice.

"Anonymous" means that you do not have to provide any personal information, such as your real name.

You can find out whether there is such a counseling center in your area by using search engines on the Internet.

In the UK, for example, this would be

<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/get-help-for-myself/i-need-support-now/helplines/>





Sources:

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