



Published on *UCSF Adolescent and Young Adult Eating Disorders Program* (<https://eatingdisorders.ucsf.edu>)

Home > About Eating Disorders > Bulimia Nervosa

Bulimia Nervosa

Bulimia nervosa is a severe eating disturbance involving recurrent episodes of uncontrolled overeating referred to as binge episodes. These binge episodes are followed by compensatory behaviors aimed at preventing weight gain, such as self-induced vomiting, laxative or diuretic abuse, fasting, or intense exercising. The disorder also involves a preoccupation with shape and weight that influences self-evaluation. People with bulimia nervosa are able to maintain a body weight at or above a minimally normal level.

Common Physical Complications Associated with Bulimia Nervosa

Bulimia nervosa is associated with numerous medical complications that can be very dangerous. However, many of these complications are reversible with discontinued use of laxatives, diuretics, and enemas, and cessation of self-induced vomiting.

Medical complications include:

- Electrolyte imbalances (which can lead to heart attack and kidney failure)
- Cardiac irregularities
- Swollen salivary glands
- Gastrointestinal disturbances
- Dental deterioration
- Finger clubbing or swelling
- Edema and dehydration
- Loss of menstrual periods and menstrual irregularities



UCSF Eating Disorders Program

Phone (new appointments and ED-IFT): (415) 514-1074

Phone (follow-up appointments): (415) 353-2002

Fax: (415) 353-2466

UCSF Main Site

© 2013 The Regents of the University of California

Source URL: <https://eatingdisorders.ucsf.edu/bulimia-nervosa>