

Bulimia Nervosa: Introduction and Symptoms

Bulimia Nervosa

Bulimics are believed to suffer from a different manifestation of the same illness as anorexics. Binge-eating vast quantities of food is followed by purging – either by inducing vomiting or the use of laxatives. Food is not absorbed into the system, and the same distorted self-image applies. Some have called them "failed anorexics", claiming they do not have the willpower to abstain from eating.

Symptoms

Damaged oesophagus – Below the diaphragm is acidic (hydrochloric acid) and above is alkaline. Persistent vomiting causes the two to mix, which in turn causes burning and damage. The oesophagus can be perforated (frayed) and may need replacement by surgery.

Damaged Tooth Enamel – caused by the stomach acids being regurgitated.

Salivary Glands Damaged – often stop working altogether. May never be able to properly digest food again.

Laxative Dependency – the bowel adapts after about two weeks, and may come to depend on laxatives to function normally. Dosage may have to be increased to gain the same effect.

Colon Damage – may be permanent, due to laxative use. Colostomy bag may be necessary. Cancer of the colon is a common result of laxative abuse.