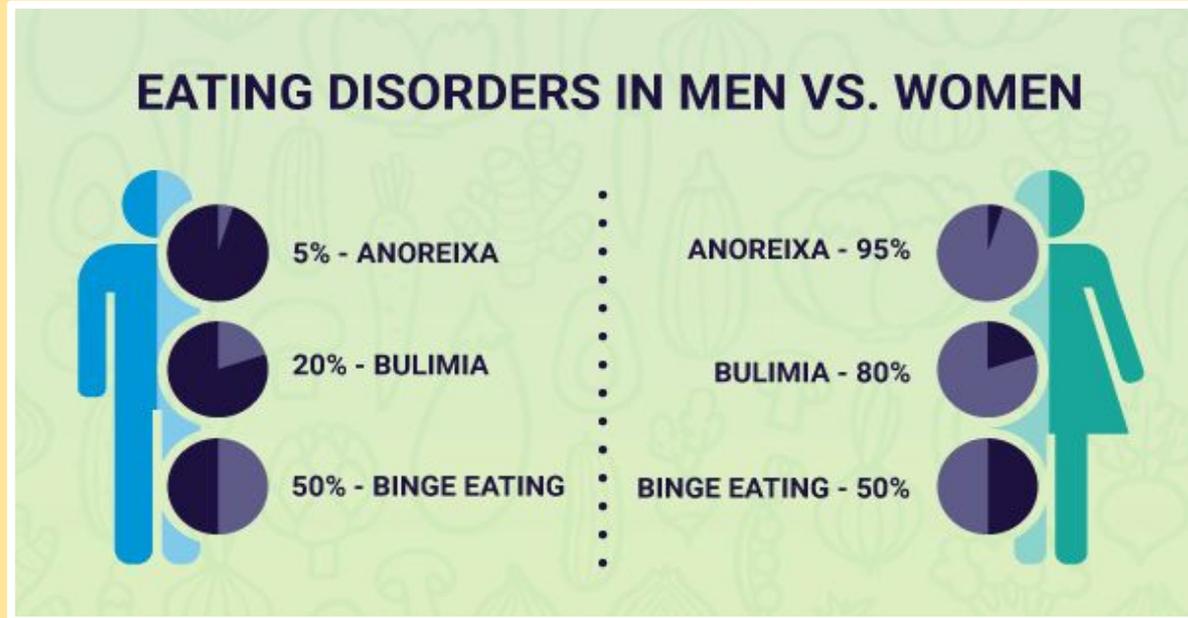


Bulimia

Bulimia is an emotional disorder involving distortion of body image and obsessive desire to lose weight, in which bouts of extreme overeating are followed by depression and self induced vomiting, purging, or fasting. Even though they appear to us as being very skinny, to themselves they look fat.



People often think eating disorders are only common with women but even though the numbers are much lower men also suffer from them.



Surveys show a rate of approximately 1.5% of the US female population and 0.5% of the male population has experienced bulimia in their lifetimes. These percentages translate to 4.7 million females and 1.5 million males.

The physical side effects of Bulimia can be very serious and long lasting-even life threatening. They include:

- **Cardiac complications with an irregular heart beat and sometimes heart failure from electrolyte imbalances**
- **Dehydration, loss of potassium, sodium, and chloride from the body**
- **Edema (excess of watery fluid collecting in the tissues of the body)**
- **Ulcers (open sores in the body), pancreatitis (inflamed pancreas causing abdominal pain)**

- **Esophageal inflammation and rupture resulting from vomiting**
- **Tooth decay due to stomach acids from frequent vomiting**
- **Digestive irregularity**
- **Fatigue and muscle weakness**
- **Organ damage**
- **Esophageal Cancer is increased due to acidic damaged from self induced vomiting**

Bulimia is also a mental health condition. Feelings of guilt, shame, lack of control, and distorted body image fuels the person into a cycle of bingeing and purging. Keeping their condition a secret may also cause stress and anxiety. Other mental health concerns that affect people with bulimia are:

- Major mood swings
- Depressive thoughts or actions
- Obsessive compulsive behavior
- Self isolation
- Self harm
- Low self esteem

Often people think that if you have bulimia you lose a great amount of weight. This is false. People with bulimia can have normal body weight. It is different than anorexia because they are not starving themselves but trying to prevent weight gain.

It is said that the pressures of society to be skinny is a possible cause of bulimia. Some scientists believe that this disorder could be genetic and that a person is more prone to developing bulimia if a parent had an eating disorder. None of this has been proven and scientists are not clear whether this is due to genes or environmental factors.

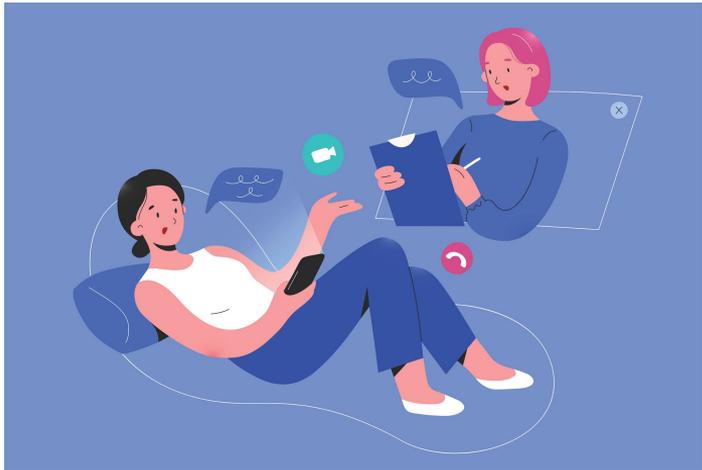
There are warning signs of bulimia if you believe someone close to you is suffering from this disorder. They are:

- **Smelling like vomit and bad breathe**
- **Misuse of laxatives**
- **Complaining about body image**
- **Expressing guilt or shame about eating**
- **Depression**
- **Irritability**

Teenage Bulimia Nervosa Statistics:

- Bulimia nervosa is the second most common eating disorder among adolescents
- Children can begin to develop bulimia as early as five years of age
- Teens who have bulimia typically eat more than two times what their peers eat during a binge
- On average, anywhere 85 to 95 percent of people with bulimia are female
- Teens can experience symptoms of both anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa simultaneously
- Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any known illness

Treatment for bulimia is usually combining psychotherapy with antidepressants. This is the most effective way to overcome this disorder.



Psychotherapy involves counseling and discussing bulimia and related issues with mental health.

- **Cognitive behavior therapy** helps to normalize eating patterns and identify unhealthy, negative behaviors and replace them with positive ones.
- **Family based treatment** to help parents help their children and deal with problems that bulimia can have on the teens development and the family
- **Interpersonal Psychotherapy** addresses difficulties in your close relationships helping to improve your communication and problem solving skills.

Antidepressants can help in the treatment of bulimia. These medications include Celexa, Lexapro, Prozac, and Zoloft.



In conclusion Bulimia is an eating disorder that not only affects the person suffering but all their loved ones as well. However with the right support and treatment a person can overcome this debilitating disease.

