

Binge Eating Disorder

A person with Binge Eating Disorder eats much more than most people would in a specific period of time. It's unlikely that this eating is promoted by hunger.

When eating, the person is likely to experience a lack of control and may eat faster than normal and feel uncomfortably full. After bingeing, people often feel guilty, disgusted and embarrassed.

What are the symptoms?

To fulfil the diagnosis for Binge Eating Disorder, the binges will have occurred at least twice a week and persisted for six months. Many, but not all people who meet the diagnostic criteria are obese. A person is considered obese if he or she weighs more than 20% of what is expected for his or her age, height and build.

In the general community, between 0.7% and 4% of people have Binge Eating Disorder. Females are 1.5 times more likely to suffer with the disorder than males. The most common age bracket for the onset of the disorder is the early 20s. It often begins after

Other Problems Often Associated With The Disorder

The bingeing may be an attempt to escape emotional pain, such as loneliness and depression. Often tension, anxiety or depression precipitate a binge; some people describe feeling numbed of these difficult feelings whilst bingeing.

For most people, the bingeing interferes with that person's working life, social life and relationships. Often a person fulfilling the diagnostic criteria will have a history of dieting.

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Stroke
- Gall Bladder disease
- Arthritis

How we can help you

When you're referred to us we'll arrange an assessment appointment with you. We'll talk with you about your experiences and why you think your eating habits have changed.

Depending on your needs, we may offer a range of treatment options to support you.

Group Work

The therapeutic groups run by the service are for people with different eating disorders which can surprise some people. The purpose of these groups is to help you to explore what is behind your eating disorder and to help you to think about changes that may help you.

First Steps Group

This is a six-week group which provides you with support and a better understanding of the steps you will need to take to start your recovery from an eating disorder. It includes nutritional information, practical ideas and educational work about the psychological, medical and social impacts that an eating disorder has on your life, as well as those around you. The group explores what you are gaining from your eating disorder and what you might feel afraid of losing, in addition to thinking about what you may gain from changing your eating patterns.

Self Esteem Group

Our eight-week group sessions can help you understand how low self-esteem may have developed and how it's maintained. It's an opportunity to try out different ways of building your self-confidence and experiment with assertive behaviour to gain a more positive relationship with yourself.

The Day Programme

The day programme can be helpful for people who have recently been discharged from a hospital for their eating disorder, or for those who require more intensive help in managing their eating difficulties. This treatment includes a range of therapeutic groups such as Body Image, Self Esteem and Nutrition which are aimed to support you in addressing difficulties concerning your relationship with food, eating and your body. There are also structured, supported mealtimes and each member receives their own individualised set of treatment aims as part of their care plan.

Individual Therapy

One to one therapy is available. People are often in two minds about recovering from their eating disorder because it can feel that the disorder brings advantages as well as disadvantages; therapy will give you the opportunity to explore these concerns. The sessions are likely to focus upon what may have triggered your eating problems in the first place and exploring different ways of handling problems. One key area to this will be altering the patterns of eating that have led to your body becoming unwell.

Dietetic Support

Dietetic support can be useful for ensuring that you have accurate information about your body's dietary requirements. A Dietician also helps you to alter your eating patterns in a way that is most manageable for you.

Tips for managing binge eating

- Don't let yourself get hungry. Eat something at regular intervals throughout the day as hunger triggers the urge to binge
- Try not to miss your next meal after a binge as skipping this is likely to trigger another binge
- Try to limit time spent bingeing or restrict bingeing to just one timeslot within the day
- Don't deprive yourself of the foods you enjoy even if they are high in fat and calories. The more you deprive yourself the more you will crave them, making bingeing more likely
- Do things that you enjoy, if you're feeling more fulfilled in your life you are less likely to seek comfort from the fridge
- Until you have your bingeing under control don't put temptation in your way, for example, if ice cream triggers a binge then don't keep it in the home
- If you feel the urge to binge, try to postpone it for 30 minutes. During this time think about what is really bothering you and create an action plan of ways to set about improving the situation
- When you get the urge to binge, try to counteract the thoughts about the short term benefits of the binge (e.g. "I need to feel numb") by thinking about your longer term goals of recovery (e.g. "I need to fight this disorder to improve my health / get my social life back / stop feeling so guilty about my actions")
- If exercise has been recommended to you by a medical professional, try to exercise 3-5 times a week for between half an hour to an hour
- Try to add structure to your day, don't leave yourself with too much time on your hands as that often triggers a binge

What Lies Behind Eating Disorders?

Eating Disorders: A Biological Basis

Research suggests that there may be a biological basis for eating disorders, for example, those with a mother or sister who have an eating disorder are twelve times more likely to develop one themselves.

Personality And Eating Disorders

Perfectionism is a common trait in people with eating disorders. Often people with eating disorders have achieved a lot but do not recognise this, instead they tend to see themselves as worthless and inadequate. They tend to see things in 'black and white', or as either 'all good' or 'all bad'.

Other Factors That Are Sometimes Involved

The family – some people with eating disorders feel smothered by their families, others feel abandoned and not cared for. Often people with eating disorders have had rigid upbringings with high demands placed on them. To escape these pressures, people sometimes turn to food and define their self-worth by their weight.

Social pressures – very image conscious friends and romantic partners can create an environment that can encourage an eating disorder.

The media – the media is not always very helpful, as it tends to portray happy, successful people as young, slim and attractive.

Accessing our service

Following your assessment at our clinic, you and the Clinician will look at some of the options available so that the most suitable service for you can be found.

Hospital Admission

If your eating disorder has placed your health in severe danger, a hospital admission may be necessary. This is not often required but is vital for people with a very low body weight where weight gain is immediately necessary to ensure survival.

During your stay in hospital you will be given a diet plan designed by a Dietician to help you gain weight in a way that is manageable and safe for you.

Often during your first week you will be confined to bed rest to minimise the pressure you place on your body whilst you are so unwell, the duration of which will be determined by your rate of recovery. Your stay in hospital will involve regular weighing and possibly supervised meals to help with your return to health.

The Home Treatment Team

The Home Treatment Team is a community team providing visits to patients in their own homes and hospital settings across the whole of Berkshire.

If you are admitted to hospital, the team will provide support to both you and your family during this difficult time and will continue to work with you to find the most appropriate care once you have left hospital. If you are at home, the team can provide emotional support, meal support and therapeutic activities such as food shopping and cooking to support you in making changes to your eating habits as well as the aspects of daily living that are disrupted by your eating disorder.

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Further support

NHS

You can find more information about anorexia, and other eating disorders, including symptoms, causes and support, from the NHS website

[nhs.uk/conditions/anorexia/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anorexia/)

Women's Aid

Helpline for domestic violence. Can arrange contact with safe houses in your area - 0808 2000 247

Samaritans

Support for any issue - 08457 90 90 90 (24hr)

Talk to Frank

Advice & info on drug (mis)use - 0300 123 6600 (24hr)

Drinkline

Advice and help for alcohol (mis)use - 0300 123 1110

Marie Stopes

Abortion and pregnancy advice & counselling service – 0845 300 8090 (24hr)

Community Mental Health Teams

Bracknell 01344 823333

Newbury 01635 292020

Reading 0118 960 5612

Crisis Resolution Home Treatment Team—0118 960 5999

Overnight crisis service – 0800 783 9505

Slough 01753 690950

Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead 01628 640200

Wokingham 0118 9890707

The CMHT can offer help in an immediate crisis

Urgent Care 0300 365 99 99 (24 hour line)

How to contact us

If you need to contact us
or require further information...

Reading: **0118 929 6417**

St Mark's Hospital: **01753 638 883**

www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk

