

Physical and Psychological Effects of Binge Eating Disorder

Binge Eating Disorder is characterised by regular episodes of binge eating, with the absence of compensation. As a result, Binge Eating Disorder often results in weight gain, and many of the physical effects of the disorder are associated with weight gain.

Physical effects associated with Binge Eating Disorder include:

- Weight gain, obesity
- High blood pressure, high cholesterol, leading to risk of stroke and/or heart attack
- Heart disease
- Gallbladder disease
- Osteoarthritis
- Fatigue and lethargy
- Bloating, physical discomfort, heartburn, diarrhoea
- Kidney problems, kidney failure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Poor bone health, joint pain, muscle pain
- Skin disorders
- Difficulty sleeping, sleep apnoea
- Irregular menstrual cycle in females
- Fertility issues

Psychological effects associated with Binge Eating Disorder include:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Low self esteem, poor body image
- Obsessive compulsiveness
- Feelings of shame, disgust or guilt, particularly following a binge
- Distress at one's over eating behaviours
- Social isolation and eating alone to conceal eating habits
- Highly sensitive about weight and physical appearance
- Suicidal ideations and increased risk of suicide

It is important to note that whilst Binge Eating Disorder is associated with large quantities of food and weight gain, not all sufferers are overweight. Indeed, binge eaters can be of normal weight, overweight or obese.

Children and adolescents are susceptible to a number of medical complications associated with Binge Eating Disorder. Complications can persist and worsen if not treated, with the possibility of lifelong illness and disease due to dysfunctional eating habits. Below is a list of common signs that a young person may be engaging in bingeing behaviour:

- 'Yo-yo' weight – noticeable decreases and increases in weight
- Stubbornness towards certain foods
- Large amounts of unaccounted for food at home
- Food stashes in the child's bedroom or private space
- Late-night or solitary splurging on food
- Social difficulty at home or school

References:

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