

Bulimia Nervosa

Symptoms:

- Frequent episodes of consuming large amounts of food, followed by purging behaviors to prevent weight gain, such as self-induced vomiting, laxative abuse, excessive exercise, or restriction
- Sense of self-worth overly related to body image
- A feeling of being out of control during the binge-eating episodes

Possible Warning Signs:

- Disappearance of large amounts of food in short periods of time
- Finding hidden wrappers or food containers
- Frequent use of the bathroom after meals
- Evidence of purging behaviors, such as the signs or smell of vomiting, used packages of laxatives or diuretics
- Compulsive need to exercise
- Calluses or cuts on the back of the hand and knuckles (from self-induced vomiting)
- Staining or erosion of teeth
- Social withdrawal

Steps in nutrition therapy:

- Distribute food throughout the day to prevent deprivation that can lead to binge eating
- Determine situations or emotional states that either increase or decrease vulnerability to bingeing and purging (ex. identifying days or situations when it is more likely to happen)
- Plan behavioral changes that will decrease the likelihood of the binge/purge occurring
- Focus on changing behaviors over losing weight
- Educate the client that purging is not an effective way to lose weight. Bulimia generally results in weight gain.
- Challenge distorted thinking