

Do You Have Binge Eating Disorder?

Objective

To identify the severity of your unhealthy eating habits and determine if you have Binge Eating Disorder.

You Should Know

Disordered eating refers to an unhealthy relationship with food, and may include chronic dieting, compulsive overeating, and bingeing. These habits can be warning signs for binge eating disorder. Problem eating habits are closely associated with other health issues, such as obesity, Type II Diabetes, depression, and anxiety. Identifying the severity of your unhealthy eating habits is the first step in establishing a plan to overcome an eating disorder.

Good nutrition is closely connected to emotional, physical, and mental health. Eating a healthy and balanced diet provides your brain and body with required vitamins, minerals, and nutrients. Your diet impacts your brain's neurochemistry, which controls your mood and your response to stress. It also influences the interaction between your brain and body, as well as memory and intellectual functioning. Healthy eating habits can be difficult to maintain, and if you have poor eating habits, your body and brain are not receiving necessary nutrients for optimal functioning.

Are there times when you eat too much or feel out of control while eating? You might have binge eating disorder, where you consume large amounts of food within a discrete period of time (e.g., eating 10,000 calories within 2 hours). You might feel powerless to stop eating, which leads to feelings of guilt, disgust, or sadness. You might use food to regulate, control, or numb unpleasant thoughts, emotions, or feelings.

Binge eating disorder includes the following eating patterns.

- You overeat excessively and compulsively.
- You feel distressed about your eating and the way it affects your mood and your life.
- You feel out of control when you eat and resume eating even if you are full.
- You often eat alone because you are embarrassed or feel shame.
- You feel depressed, guilty, or disgusted after eating.

Food is not something to control or battle. Instead, food is a nourishing fuel that supports good health. Healthy or normalized eating involves having at least three well-balanced meals and possibly several snacks each day (on average, eating 1,800-2,200 calories every day). If you are eating much less than this your portion sizes are too small. If you are eating much more than this you are likely overeating. This worksheet will help you identify the severity of your unhealthy eating habits.

What to Do

Read the following 53 statements and rate yourself, where:

1 = I rarely or never experience this.

2 = This is a slight problem for me.

3 = I experience this sometimes.

4 = I experience this frequently.

5 = This is a significant problem for me.

6 = I always experience this.

7 = This is a severe problem and causes significant challenges in my life.

_____ I eat quickly and I feel uncomfortably full from eating so quickly.

_____ I lose control over how much I eat.

_____ I cannot control my eating.

_____ I feel helpless when it comes to controlling my urges to overeat.

_____ I feel guilt or shame after I eat.

_____ Food controls my life.

_____ I skip meals because I do not have time to eat, then I overeat because I am 'starving.'

_____ I feel bloated after I eat.

_____ I eat fast food more than three times each week.

_____ I eat in secret or 'sneak' food.

_____ I eat when I am bored.

_____ Nothing seems to distract me from thinking about food.

_____ I eat fried foods more than three times each week.

_____ I go off and on diets and try 'fad' diets.

_____ I experience intense food cravings.

_____ I feel 'foggy' and have trouble concentrating, especially later in the day.

_____ I rely on caffeine to get through the day.

_____ My weight fluctuates by more than 5 lbs.

_____ I am gassy, constipated, or have diarrhea more than once per week.

_____ I eat even when I am not hungry because I feel distressed or upset.

_____ I drink soda or sweetened drinks daily.

_____ I purchase food and hide it.

_____ I hide empty packages or wrappers after eating.

_____ I ignore my body's feeling of fullness.

_____ I typically eat after 8:00 PM.

_____ I find myself waking up in the middle of the night to eat.

_____ I eat so much that I feel nauseous.

_____ I think about how losing weight would make me so much happier.

- _____ I plan to eat when I am alone so no one will watch me eat.
- _____ I skip meals and then grab convenience foods because I am so hungry.
- _____ My evening meal is the largest meal of the day.
- _____ I find myself finishing entire packages of food because I tune out while watching TV.
- _____ I eat even if I am not hungry.
- _____ I overeat foods that I really do not enjoy.
- _____ I constantly think about when I will eat my next meal.
- _____ When I eat 'forbidden foods' I feel like I blew my diet and eat even more.
- _____ I create strict diets for myself but break the diets and binge eat.
- _____ I cannot voluntarily stop eating.
- _____ I do not eat as much when I am with other people because I feel self-conscious.
- _____ I feel judged by other people because of my weight, what I eat, or how much I eat.
- _____ I do not eat regular meals because I am always snacking.
- _____ I find myself snacking even after a large meal.
- _____ I spend a lot of time thinking about how much I ate or trying not to eat more.
- _____ I don't know how much I should eat in order to feel satisfied.
- _____ I don't know what is a "normal" amount of food for me.
- _____ I plan my daily schedule around eating.
- _____ I deserve to treat myself after a long or stressful day.
- _____ I use food to manage my stress.
- _____ I overeat whenever I am upset.
- _____ I feel disgusted with myself after overeating.
- _____ I feel fat and I am disgusted with my body.
- _____ It is difficult for me to lose weight.
- _____ I am unhappy with my body shape or size.

Now add up your score _____

Your Score:

1 to 124 points - Indicates a mild problem. Your responses suggest that you are not experiencing major concerns about your weight or shape, nor are you currently engaging in many unhealthy eating habits.

125 to 250 points - Indicates a moderate problem. Your responses suggest that you are experiencing some concerns about your weight or shape, and you are engaging in some unhealthy eating behaviors that you might want to address. You might want to seek support from a therapist, mentor, or join a group.

More than 250 points - Indicates a severe problem. Your responses suggest that you are experiencing significant concerns about your weight or shape, you are engaging in eating behaviors that are leading to significant distress in your life, and your health might be affected.

Reflections on This Exercise

What are your top five areas of concern regarding your eating?

How do your eating habits affect your day-to-day life and routines?

What are three things you can do to improve your eating habits?

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What could you do differently to make progress in this area?
