

Natural Help 4...

Bulimia



What is Bulimia?

Bulimia is an eating disorder characterized by the eating of a large amount of food in a short space of time (**binging**) followed by methods to 'rid' the body of the food (**purging**), such as self-induced vomiting, excessive use of laxatives, diuretics, fasting, or exercise.

People with **bulimia nervosa** struggle with their **binge eating disorder**. They often **feel that they are out of control** during their binging sessions and then feel tremendous shame and guilt afterwards. It is the **self-induced purging** that makes them feel a release of this [common nervous tension](#) and guilt.

Characteristics of Bulimics

Unlike anorexia nervosa, (where the individual usually feels a sense of accomplishment and often denies having a problem), **bulimics generally feel ashamed of their binge eating disorder** and know that what they are doing 'is not normal'.

They **evaluate themselves primarily on their body weight and shape**, and thus often have a **very poor self-esteem**. Ironically, most people with **bulimia** tend to be either overweight or fall within 10% of their normal body weight, and **rarely attain the skinny figures that they desire and aim for**.

As with other eating disorders, **most bulimics are female**, and the disorder tends to develop in adolescents or young women. The **binge eating disorder** known as **bulimia** is much more prevalent in Western societies than elsewhere in the world. This is possibly due to the common society-ideal of a slim, trim figure that is emphasized and encouraged by the media. **Bulimia nervosa** is a serious condition that **can cause extremely severe medical consequences if left untreated**.

Thankfully, there are **binge eating disorder treatment** plans that offer help. **Overcoming bulimia nervosa** can be very challenging, so the earlier treatment starts, the better the chances are for a positive outcome. It is important to stick to treatment and resolve **underlying emotional issues** to reduce the chances of relapse.

Diagnosing Bulimia

Should you seek professional help for yourself or your child, a battery of tests will be done by a health care professional before a diagnosis is made. This should

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include a full physical examination, with possible blood tests and urine analysis. Your doctor will be **checking for confirmation of an eating disorder**, as well as checking for any damage or medical complications that may have been caused by the [bulimia](#). A person **overcoming bulimia** will also be referred to a psychologist, who will take a full personal and family history, discuss your **feelings and attitudes towards food and body-image**, and also note the history of your condition - how often you binge and purge, the emotions associated with these events, and how it is affecting your life.


Symptoms of Bulimia

- Eating a large amount of food in a fixed period of time, followed by compensating techniques (exercise) or purging (vomiting or use of laxatives). This must occur at least twice a week for a period of three months.
- Sense of loss of control during binges.
- Self-evaluation that is unreasonably influenced by body shape and weight.
- Distorted body perception that may be accompanied by poor self-esteem, anxiety and depression.
- A pre-occupation with dieting, but also a tendency to hoard food or food-related items such as recipes and cookbooks.

What Causes Bulimia?


- **Genetics** – Research suggests that **women with a bulimic family member** are more likely to develop [bulimia](#) than the average women. While this may suggest that there is a genetic component to the disorder, it may be due to the **shared experiences and learned behaviors** within the family context. It is also likely that **personality traits** related to [bulimia](#), such as perfectionism, [emotional](#) sensitivity, and addictive personality tendencies are inherited rather than the disorder itself.
- **Family and learned behavior** – As mentioned, learned behavior may contribute to an increased risk of [bulimia](#). Parents who place great importance on physical appearances, criticize their child's body shape, or who are dieting themselves are more likely to have a child who will develop an eating disorder.
- **Culture and the media** – Western society places great emphasis on the ideal body, and this is especially aimed at women. The pre-pubescent female figure is highly valued, and many young women feel that they need to strive for this **unrealistic and unhealthy ideal**. Many TV programs and magazines encourage thinness, as hundreds of young women aspire to look like the models and actresses that society idealizes. Both young men and women have almost come to expect that these “air-brushed” and semi-starving models represent the normal population.
- **Restrictive eating** – Dieting may be a huge cause of [bulimia](#). Studies have shown that **dieting and restrictive eating** lead to obsessions about food, which may ultimately lead to [bulimia](#). Once again, society, the media, peers, and sometimes parents often promote dieting as opposed to a healthy lifestyle and balanced diet. Being overweight as a child or teenager is often a precipitator to developing [bulimia](#).

Help for Bulimia



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

There are a number of [binge eating disorder treatment](#) options available to **help in the struggle against bulimia**. Some form of psychotherapy is usually necessary, as **bulimia is essentially a psychological disorder**, wrapped in emotions and personal conflicts that need to be dealt with. Pharmaceutical medications are also commonly prescribed in order to help treat accompanying problems such as depression.

Psychotherapy

Individual, family or group therapy may be very beneficial in dealing with [bulimia](#). Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) helps the individual **address the negative ideas surrounding food, body-image and self-esteem**, while providing constructive ways of implementing new food habits. **Family therapy** may help the entire family deal with underlying conflicts and provide coping techniques for the family as a whole, while support groups provide a source of support and comfort. Individual therapy **addresses underlying personal issues such as self-esteem and guilt** associated with food. On the whole, psychotherapy is very successful in treating [bulimia](#), and it is advised that you research which type or types of therapy would best suit you.

Drug Treatments

Medication may be prescribed to bulimic patients to help improve related symptoms such as accompanying depression, anxiety or obsessive behavior. Commonly prescribed drugs include antidepressants such as fluoxetine (Prozac), paroxetine (Paxil), and the antipsychotic drug lithium. While these drugs may help initially, **up to 80% of patients relapse after the medication is discontinued**, and in many cases, the side-effects are distressing.

It is strongly advised that you research any prescription medication and their side-effects before agreeing to drug therapy.

Natural Herbal and Homeopathic Remedies for Bulimia

Of the [binge eating disorder treatment](#) options available, natural remedies can be of great benefit in alleviating symptoms of anxiety and depression associated with [bulimia](#), without the negative side effects of prescription medications. Some **herbal formulas that assist with the related symptoms of bulimia** include Passiflora Incarnata, which soothes the mind and calms the nerves. Hypericum perforatum (St. John's Wort) has been very successful in treating the depression, which often accompanies an eating disorder.

Natural remedies such as **MindSoothe** may **facilitate a reasonable attitude and lessen the burden on pressured minds**. MindSoothe may also promote a well-adjusted outlook and positive temperament, support healthy sleep patterns, and routine appetite.

Are there other disorders that may be related to Bulimia?

Certain disorders and ailments may accompany [bulimia](#), these include:

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- Anorexia nervosa
- Depression
- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Substance abuse

Tips for Coping with Bulimia

- **Do not diet or skip meals!** The more you restrict your food intake, the more likely you are to desire what you cannot have and binge. Rather, **eat a healthy, balanced diet** and contact a dietician or nutritionist for a professional and personalized meal plan. Short-term diets do not have long-term effects, so aim to **make healthy eating a positive lifestyle change.**
- **Try to avoid over-eating or binging.** If you avoid binging, you will be less likely to feel the over-whelming need to purge. This may not be all that easy, but **start by simply being aware of situations** where large amounts of food are going to be tempting you to compulsively overeat (e.g., buffet dinners or 3 course meals).
- **Avoid certain media images** (T.V. programs, magazines and internet sites) or peers that may encourage a “skinner-than-thou” type figure. These are **unhealthy influences that give you unrealistic expectations** of what a normal, healthy female figure should look like, and are no good for your self-esteem!
- **Love yourself for who you are!** Learn to appreciate your positive attributes and don’t judge yourself based on your body-image.
- **Identify the situations and emotional circumstances that trigger your binges and purges.** Once you discover these underlying issues, you can make steps to cope with them. For instance, if your [bulimia](#) is particularly bad during times of stress, try some **stress management techniques** and reduce the amount of stress factors in your life. Try to keep a journal and note down your triggers.
- **Bring your problem into the light.** The secrecy and shame of [bulimia](#) often perpetuates the problem. Try opening up to your family or a trusted friend. You may find they are an incredible **source of encouragement and support.**
- **Join a support group** such as Over Eaters Anonymous. They provide you with recovery steps and the support and understanding that will equip you to successfully **face your disorder.**
- **Be patient with yourself.** [Bulimia](#) is not just about bingeing and purging, it is an emotional illness where one **uses food to deal with difficult emotions.** Don't expect to be better in a week or a month. However, if you keep striving for support and **ways of healing yourself as a whole,** emotionally and physically, you will find yourself slowly grow into **healthier ways of living that fulfill you from the inside.**



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Tips for Concerned Parents

- Many parents feel concerned that their child may have an eating disorder or may develop one. **Bulimia is less noticeable than anorexia**, as there is usually not a dramatic drop in weight. Your child may even eat in front of you, only to purge it when you are not aware. Be wary if your child always rushes to the bathroom after meals, or repeatedly excuses himself or herself from the table before everyone else. He or she may also try to hoard food or laxatives in his/her room. If children show any peculiar behavior after meals, (for example, they insist on running around the block each night after dinner), you may want to investigate further.
- If you are concerned, **discuss it with you child in a way that is non-accusational**. It is important to give your child the opportunity to be honest without you losing your composure. Remind him or her that you are always there to talk to and support her.
- **Research the facts about bulimia and find out about treatment options**. There are plenty of recommended books and internet forums that will be able to assist you in helping your child.
- **Bulimia** does not disappear overnight. It is an uphill struggle that sometimes entails set backs. If your child is in the process of trying to recover, she may slip back into old ways - feel free to confront her in a constructive manner, but bear in mind, it is not a sign of failure. The **road to recovery can be slow and painful** for a person learning new habits and positive ways of dealing with uncomfortable feelings.
- **Help your child develop a healthy relationship with food by adopting one yourself**. Minimize talk about dieting and weight. If you are critical of weight in yourself and others, your child may start to develop unrealistic expectations.
- Praise your children for what they do and not what they look like. **Encourage their inner strengths** and beautiful personality traits.
- Have sit-down meals with your family each night. Make it a time for conversations and **connecting with each other**.
- Provide your child with **problem-solving skills and encourage communication** within your family. Many cases of eating disorders result when underlying family conflicts are left unresolved.

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is **not the only treatment option**. Conventional Western medicine (often called allopathic or orthodox medicine) is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools, and many pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available and freely used-- even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is 'better' than the other, many responsible

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doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that **both have a role to play in the treatment program.**

Natural medicine has often been frowned upon by conventional doctors, especially by those who do not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby **providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options** from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, **natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed** by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the **body has an innate capacity to heal itself.** While natural medicines are often called 'alternative' or 'complimentary' medicines, they are, in fact, a **unique and independent form of medicine** in their own right, well able to **treat a variety of conditions.** Perhaps the term 'holistic' medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine. This encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a **holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease.** In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to **support health** (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer. In many cases, **holistic medicine can accomplish just as much,** if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, **natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.**

In many cases, they can **succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed.** Despite frequent reports that they are 'unproven' and 'untested', the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a **long history of usage** and there is a **wealth of empirical evidence** to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to **support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.**

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines **must be manufactured in the correct way,** following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately, **not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards,** often resulting in a



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flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ‘**standardized**’ **extracts** may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have **grave disadvantages**, including an increase in side effects, as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which **retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb** as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, **always choose wisely**. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life-threatening condition, don’t make changes without first discussing them with your doctor, in order that your condition may be monitored. **Well-informed and supportive practitioners will support patients** who want to take responsibility for their own health.

Related Natural Remedies:

MindSoothe: Promote balanced mood and feelings of well-being.

MindSoothe is a 100% safe, non-addictive, natural herbal remedy that has been especially formulated by a Clinical Psychologist for adults and teens, and comes in an easy-to-take capsule form.

MindSoothe can be used to safely **maintain emotional health, balanced mood and systemic harmony in the brain and nervous system**, without harmful side effects.

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Ensuring the healthy functioning of all brain and nervous system cells enhances the bio-availability of supplements, remedies and even nutrients in your diet. It also lessens the chance of a nervous breakdown. **Treating panic disorder** in people who suffer a **nervous breakdown** usually involves therapy. The doctor **treating panic disorder** will monitor the symptoms carefully to establish a treatment plan that aims to restore the health of the **nervous system**.

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