

## COPING WITH BULIMIA

**David Lowenstein, Ph.D.**  
**Psychologist**

- Eating Disorders are a common mental health problem in today's society
- This disorder is more commonly a female illness
- Many women of all ages have been compulsive overeaters most of their lives
- Their health gets increasingly worse, they battle depression and get temporary assistance and relief through drugs
- Because of this some live lonely lives with food as their prime companion
- Despite the inner agony and desperation that accompanies compulsive overeating, many have what most could consider to be good lives

Bulimia Nervosa is an eating disorder characterized by:

- Recurrent binge eating (eating a much larger amount of food than most individuals would eat under similar circumstances)
  - Recurrent purging behavior (self-induced vomiting, misuse of laxatives, diuretics, enemas, fasting, and/or excessive exercising)
  - Bingeing and purging behavior both occur at least twice a week for at least 3 months
  - Extreme preoccupation with body appearance and weight
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- There may be many serious repercussions to repetitive bulimic behaviors such as: tooth decay, gum disease, malnutrition, digestive problems, electrolyte imbalances that can effect critical organs such as the heart
  - Additionally relationships suffer as the individual with bulimia becomes increasingly withdrawn and secretive
  - They feel the pain and subdue this pain by eating and purging

Ways to Get Help:

1. Seek professional help – research shows that a combination of psychotherapy and antidepressant medication and education is the most effective approach
2. Develop constructive strategies for coping
3. Seek the assurance and assistance for a friend

Suggestions for Families and Friends:

1. Let them know that they are loved – NO MATTER WHAT
2. Do not try to control their food intake
3. Be a good listener
4. Be patient
5. Educate yourself about bulimia