

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON HEALTH CENTER**

**-HEALTHBERRY-**  
[www.uh.edu/admin/hc](http://www.uh.edu/admin/hc)

**BULIMIA**

Bulimia is a psychological eating disorder characterized by abnormal perceptions of body images, constant craving for food and binge eating. Following the binge eating, the patient usually purges by self-induced vomiting, laxatives or both. Characteristically, adolescent or young adult females are affected.

The hallmark of bulimia is recurrent episodes of binge eating followed by purging. Typically, large amounts of food are consumed in a short period of time. Bulimics have a preference for high-calorie convenience foods during a binge. Often they eat in secret. Most of the patients are aware that the eating pattern is abnormal, and they often have a fear of being unable to stop eating. Self-induced vomiting, the use of laxatives or both usually follow termination of an eating binge. Depression and guilt follow an eating binge, and frequently result in repeated attempts to lose weight with severely restrictive diets.

From a psychological point of view, these patients usually are from a strict, compulsive, perfectionist family environment. Often, they are depressed and cope with stress poorly. Most have a neurotic preoccupation with being physically attractive.

As with Anorexia Nervosa, treatment is difficult. A group approach is probably best. Often counseling, psychotherapy, biofeedback, patience and a lot of love are required.

Complications such as fluid and electrolyte imbalance, cardiac irregularities, and emotional crises require hospitalization and/or treatment in an eating disorder facility. Antidepressant medications are sometimes helpful.

If you have any specific questions, please contact us at the University Health Center.

We at the Health Center will be happy to help you.



**Healthfully yours,**

**Dr. Healthberry**

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For questions or comments you can;

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