

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview - Binge eating disorder	1
Symptoms of binge eating disorder	1
Warning signs of binge eating disorder in someone else	2
Getting help for binge eating disorder	2
Getting help for someone else	3
Treatment for binge eating	3
Causes of binge eating	3
More in Binge eating disorder	4

[Home](#) > [Health A to Z](#) > [Mental health](#) > [Mental health conditions](#) > [Binge eating disorder](#)

Overview - Binge eating disorder

Binge eating disorder involves regularly eating a lot of food over a short period of time until you're uncomfortably full.

It's a serious mental health condition where people eat without feeling like they're in control of what they're doing.

Binges are sometimes planned in advance, but can be spontaneous. They are usually done alone, and may include "special" binge foods. You may feel guilty or ashamed after binge eating.

Men and women of any age can get binge eating disorder, but it often starts when people are in their 20s or older.

Symptoms of binge eating disorder

The main symptom of binge eating disorder is eating a lot of food in a short time and not being able to stop when full. Other symptoms include:

- eating when not hungry

- eating very fast during a binge
- eating alone or secretly
- feeling depressed, guilty, ashamed or disgusted after binge eating

People who regularly eat in this way may have binge eating disorder.

Warning signs of binge eating disorder in someone else

Someone you care about may have an eating disorder if they:

- change their behaviour or have changes in their mood
- eat a lot of food, very quickly
- try to hide how much they're eating
- store up supplies of food
- put on weight (but this does not happen to everyone with binge eating disorder)

Getting help for binge eating disorder

If you think you may have binge eating disorder, see a GP as soon as you can.

They'll ask you about your eating habits and how you're feeling, and check your weight and overall health.

The GP should refer you to an eating disorder specialist or team of specialists if they think you have binge eating disorder or another eating disorder.

It can be hard to admit you need help with an eating disorder, so bringing a friend or loved one with you

to your appointment may help.

You can also talk in confidence to an adviser from eating disorders charity [Beat](#) by calling its adult helpline on 0808 801 0677 or youth helpline on 0808 801 0711.

Getting help for someone else

If you're concerned that a family member or friend may have binge eating disorder, let them know you're worried about them and encourage them to see a GP. You could offer to go along with them.

Read more about [talking to your child about eating disorders](#) and [supporting someone with an eating disorder](#).

Treatment for binge eating

Most people recover from binge eating disorder with the right support and treatment, but it may take time.

The main treatments are:

- guided self-help programmes
- a type of talking therapy called [cognitive behavioural therapy \(CBT\)](#), which is in group sessions or individual (1-on-1) sessions

[Read more about treating binge eating disorder](#)

Causes of binge eating

The exact causes of binge eating disorder are not known, but you are more likely to have an eating disorder if:

- you or a member of your family has a history of eating disorders, depression, or alcohol or drug misuse
- you're too worried about being slim, particularly if you also feel pressure from society or your job, for example, ballet dancers, models or athletes
- you have anxiety, low self-esteem, an obsessive personality or are a perfectionist
- you've experienced a stressful event or trauma

More in [Binge eating disorder](#)

Overview - Binge eating disorder

[Treatment - Binge eating disorder](#)

Page last reviewed: 17 July 2023

Next review due: 17 July 2026

[Home](#)

[Health A to Z](#)

[NHS services](#)

[Live Well](#)

[Mental health](#)

[Care and support](#)

[Pregnancy](#)

[COVID-19](#)

[NHS App](#)

[Find my NHS
number](#)

[View your GP
health record](#)

[View your test
results](#)

[About the NHS](#)

[Healthcare abroad](#)

[Other NHS websites](#)

[Profile editor login](#)

[About us](#)

[Give us feedback](#)

[Accessibility
statement](#)

[Our policies](#)

[Cookies](#)

© Crown copyright

