



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Bulimia Nervosa

Eating disorders can be an intimidating topic to bring up with your doctor, but asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

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| Anemia | A deficiency of red blood cells that can lead to feelings of weakness and muscle fatigue. |
| Atypical bulimia | When someone meets most, but not all, criteria that would need to be met in order to be diagnosed with bulimia nervosa. |
| Binge eating | Eating an amount, during a certain period of time (example: one hour), that would be considered more than what most people would eat during that same given period of time. In addition, people often feel a lack of control during periods of binge eating. |
| Bulimia nervosa | An eating disorder characterized by a repeated cycle of binge eating and using compensatory behaviors to undo, or compensate for, the effects of binge eating. |
| Compensatory behavior | A behavior that is meant to "undo" the effects of eating, such as the inappropriate use of laxatives or diuretics, self-induced vomiting, fasting or excessive exercise. Can sometimes be referred to as purging behavior. |
| Diabulimia | The intentional misuse of insulin for type 1 diabetes. |
| Electrolyte imbalance | When the body is unable to regulate key chemicals in the body that are in charge of things like heartbeat, neuron firing and muscle functioning. |
| Food ritual | A pattern of specific eating behavior, such as not allowing food to touch, eating only particular foods, eating a specific amount of food at each meal, excessive chewing of food. |



Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage bulimia nervosa.

About Symptoms

- Could I have bulimia nervosa if I don't necessarily look underweight?
- What kinds of symptoms do doctors look for to know if someone has bulimia?

About Causes & Risk Factors

- What factors influence someone developing bulimia?
- Are there certain people more at risk for bulimia than others?
- What are some of the medical complications that people might experience if they have bulimia?
- Can someone develop anorexia and bulimia at the same time?

About Diagnosis

- What is the difference between binge eating disorder and bulimia?
- How can I know for sure if I have bulimia nervosa?
- Are there certain tests or evaluations that I would need to take in order to be diagnosed?
- What happens after someone is diagnosed?

About Treatment

- What are some of the best treatment approaches for bulimia nervosa?
- What is the likelihood of fully recovering?
- Are there medications that people generally take during their treatment for bulimia?
- How will I know what treatments will work best for me?
- Will I have to go away for treatment or are there local treatment options available?
