

8 Ways You're Binge-Eating

Ideally, we would all only eat when we are hungry and stop eating when we are full. However, sometime emotions like boredom, sadness or joy cause us to eat when we are not hungry at all. This type of emotional eating can lead to weight problems if it happens too often.

Binge-eating is a far more serious condition than emotional eating or mindless eating. Binge-eating often leads to morbid obesity, which by definition can become life-threatening due to the vast array of health complications associated with obesity, such as heart disease and cancer. People with a binge-eating disorder often feel out of control with their eating and sometimes describe their binges as out of body experiences. Binge-eating causes deep feelings of shame that when experienced over a long period of time can actually lead to suicide. Binge-eating is the most common type of eating disorder.

The National Eating Disorders Association describes binge-eating disorders in the following ways:

1. Eating in a discrete period of time (e.g., within any two-hour period), an amount of food that is definitely larger than what most people would eat in a similar period of time under similar circumstances.
2. A sense of lack of control over eating during the episode (e.g., a feeling that one cannot stop eating or control what or how much one is eating).
3. Eating much more rapidly than normal.
4. Eating until feeling uncomfortably full.
5. Eating large amounts of food when not feeling physically hungry.

6. Eating alone because of feeling embarrassed by how much one is eating.
7. Feeling disgusted with oneself, depressed or very guilty afterward.
8. The binge-eating occurs, on average, at least once a week for three months.

According to WebMd, the following strategies can help defeat a binge before it starts:

1. Follow a regular meal plan. This will minimize extreme hunger, which can lead to a binge.
2. Focus on overall health rather than weight.
3. Learn your triggers. Recognize what feelings and interactions cause you to want you to binge.
4. Remove temptation. Don't keep foods that you like to binge on around the house.
5. Look for other ways to feel good. People who binge often feel depressed. Look for non-food ways to lift your mood.
6. When you feel an urge coming on, refer to a previously compiled list of goals and ask yourself if bingeing is consistent with them. Take a walk or otherwise delay the binge, and the urge might go away.
7. Stop during the binge. Even if you start to binge, you can stop after a few bites. This gets easier.

If you try these suggestions and they do not work, consider making an appointment with a psychologist or counselor who specializes in binge-eating disorders.