

## **Bulimia Nervosa**

People with bulimia nervosa may try to restrict their food intake in some way. They then eat and feel extremely guilty, often eating much more than they intend to. Out of control eating is called binge eating. After a binge, people with bulimia try to get rid of the calories by vomiting, using laxatives, or exercising excessively.

People with bulimia often:

- feel extremely guilty and ashamed of their behaviour
- feel like failed dieters or like they lack self control
- find that bingeing and purging helps calm them
- feel intensely anxious if they have eaten and cannot purge
- visit a bathroom after eating; they may run the water or take a shower so others don't hear them vomiting
- seem to prefer one washroom, like a basement washroom with more privacy

Many people with bulimia hide their behaviour because they fear being judged by others. Often they do not appear outwardly ill so others may not notice their behaviour. Bulimia can lead to serious health problems, including:

- heart and kidney problems
- electrolyte imbalance
- damage to the mouth, throat or teeth
- gum problems
- chest pain
- muscle cramps
- fatigue

Laxative use can lead to dependence, as well as bowel damage and dehydration.