

Bulimia Nervosa DSM-5 Criteria

ICD-10-CM code: F50.2

Bulimia nervosa is an eating disorder characterized by recurrent episodes of binge eating, where individuals consume unusually large amounts of food in a short period, accompanied by a sense of lack of control. This is followed by inappropriate compensatory behaviors to prevent weight gain, such as self-induced vomiting, misuse of laxatives or diuretics, fasting, or excessive exercise.

Diagnostic criteria

Criterion A

Recurrent episodes of binge eating. An episode of binge eating is characterized by both of the following:

1. Eating, in a discrete period of time (e.g., within any 2-hour period), an amount of food that is definitely larger than what most individuals 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).

Criterion B

Recurrent inappropriate compensatory behaviors in order to prevent weight gain, such as self-induced vomiting; misuse of laxatives, diuretics, or other medications; fasting; or excessive exercise.

Criterion C

The binge eating and inappropriate compensatory behaviors both occur, on average, at least once a week for 3 months.

Criterion D

Self-evaluation is unduly influenced by body shape and weight.

Criterion E

The disturbance does not occur exclusively during episodes of anorexia nervosa.

Specify if:

- **In partial remission:** After full criteria for bulimia nervosa were previously met, some, but not all, of the criteria have been met for a sustained period of time.
- **In full remission:** After full criteria for bulimia nervosa were previously met, none of the criteria have been met for a sustained period of time.

Specify current severity:

- **Mild:** An average of 1–3 episodes of inappropriate compensatory behaviors per week.

- **Moderate:** An average of 4–7 episodes of inappropriate compensatory behaviors per week.
 - **Severe:** An average of 8–13 episodes of inappropriate compensatory behaviors per week.
 - **Extreme:** An average of 14 or more episodes of inappropriate compensatory behaviors per week.
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Additional notes

Remember to look for episodes of binge eating where patients feel out of control, followed by compensatory behaviors like vomiting or excessive exercise, occurring at least once a week for 3 months.

Self-evaluation is heavily influenced by body shape and weight, and these behaviors shouldn't occur exclusively during anorexia nervosa episodes.
Specify remission status and severity based on the frequency of compensatory behaviors.

Use open-ended questions, maintain a non-judgmental approach, and consider co-occurring disorders.

Regular updates, and work together, okay?

Reminder: This handout is an abridged version of the DSM-5-TR's section on Bulimia Nervosa that focuses only on the diagnostic criteria. For more details regarding the diagnostic features, associated features, risk factors, diagnostic markers, differential diagnosis, prevalence data, functional consequences, and development and course of this disorder, consult the complete DSM-5-TR.
