

Inner Beauty



Eating disorders – Dove takes the first step

There are people in Singapore who are seemingly immune to the fragrant wafts of nasi lemak and the unmistakable scents of char kway teow. No, they have not lost their sense of smell. These are the unlucky ones who are suffering from eating disorders

A survey commissioned by Dove revealed that 84% of teenage girls in Singapore wish that they could change their physical appearance. I am extremely ashamed to say that I'm actually one of them.

60% of them feel bad about themselves because of looks or weight. Once again, I join the club.

Yet why exactly do we suffer? Is it the precedence of super (skinny) models on numerous magazine covers and billboards? Is it a lack of proper education? Or does it all boil down to simple self-esteem issues?

KNOWING YOUR A, B, CS

There are three types of eating disorders: Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa and Binge Eating.

Anorexia Nervosa refers to those who starve themselves and despite suffering from severe hunger pangs, refuse to eat. They might be bone-thin, but still see themselves as overweight and are terrified of gaining weight.

Amazingly enough, if either of your parents have suffered from anorexia, you actually are at a higher risk of suffering from it due to the same genes!

Symptoms

- Overwhelming fear of gaining weight or becoming fat
- Believe themselves to be fat, despite their actual weight
- Believes that body weight, shape and size is directly related to how they feel about themselves
- A female sufferer will miss at least three consecutive menstrual cycles

B IS FOR BULLEMLIA

Bulimia sufferers are those who eat and then force themselves to either throw up, or use laxatives to pass out the food they've just eaten. Bulimic sufferers might also have episodes of binge eating, or hit the gym for long periods of time, say 4 to 5 hours.

Symptoms

- Recurrent episodes of binge eating, at least twice a month for a period of three months
- Eating within any 2-hour period any amount of food that is definitely larger than what an average person would eat
- A sense of lack of control (i.e. you just can't stop eating)
- Engaging in behaviour to stop weight gain (i.e. self-induced vomiting, overusing laxatives, diuretics, enemas, and even excessive exercise)

B IS ALSO FOR BINGE EATING

Though we might use the word "binge" rather loosely these days, binge eating the disorder is characterised specifically by a lack of control.

Symptoms

- Eating much more rapidly than usual
- Eating until uncomfortably full
- Eating large amounts of food, even when not physically hungry
- Eating alone out of embarrassment at the quantity of food being eaten
- Feelings of disgust, depression, or guilt after overeating

DOVE DIVES IN

In Singapore, there's been a 6-fold increase in the number of people who have eating disorders. And these are just the numbers who have voluntarily sought help. And no matter how many times you can say, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder"