

### **Eating Disorders Not Otherwise Specified (EDNOS)**

#### **What is Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified?**

Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified, also known as A-Typical Eating Disorder, is the diagnosis given to someone struggling with disordered eating who does not meet the criteria for Anorexia Nervosa (AN), Bulimia Nervosa (BN), or Binge Eating Disorder (BED).

#### **Types of EDNOS:**

##### **Food Restriction:**

- People who meet all criteria for Anorexia except have regular menstrual cycles or their weight falls within the normal range

##### **Binge Eating:**

- People who meet all criteria for Bulimia except they engage in binge eating or purging less than twice weekly or for fewer than three months

##### **Purging Behaviour:**

- People who purge after eating small amounts of food while retaining a normal body weight

##### **Binge Eating Disorder:**

- Currently, people who meet the criteria for Binge Eating Disorder, an ED that will have its own diagnostic criteria in the next DSM

##### **Compulsive Overeating (CO):**

- The difference between CO and BED is that sufferers of CO chronically overeat while sufferers of BED usually periodically binge from some emotional trigger

##### **Chew and Spit/Regurgitation:**

- 'Chew and spit' is when a person chews food and spits it out, rather than swallowing
- Regurgitation is when food is swallowed, and is then brought back up into the mouth for re-chewing
- Some people eat non-foods, such as paper tissues, to fill themselves up without the calorific intake

##### **Orthorexia Nervosa (ON):**

- Fixated on eating food deemed as healthy and 'pure'
- Unlike Anorexia, people with ON are concerned with the quality not quantity of food
- Most foods they eat will be organic and they will avoid foods that are processed and high in sugar and fats
- ON can be the precursor to Anorexia and vice versa

### **Prader-Willi Syndrome:**

- Complex disorder that is present from birth
- People with this syndrome have an insatiable appetite because of a defect that means they never feel full
- There are number of physical problems associated, including: delayed motor development; abnormal growth; dental problems; obesity; and, diabetes

### **Night Eating Disorder (NED):**

- NED involves eating the majority of food late at night, or waking from sleep to eat
- Often people with this problem will fast during the day
- NED is thought to be stress-related
- It produces feelings of guilt and shame, not enjoyment
- Effects 10% of obese people seeking treatment for their obesity

### **Sleep Eating Disorder (SED):**

- Sufferers will binge on foods, usually in large quantities, during the night when sleep walking
- They mostly do not remember the binges
- Usually brought on when anxious, stressed or angry

### **Pica:**

- Pica is a form of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Sufferers have cravings to lick items that have no nutritional value such as chalk, plaster, paint, soda, starch, glue, rust, coffee grounds and cigarette ashes
- It has been suggested that it may be associated with mineral deficiencies (like iron or zinc) or other psychological problems
- Side-effects could include lead poisoning, malnutrition, abdominal problems, intestinal obstruction, dental problems and death in more severe circumstances

### **Main characteristics of EDNOS:**

The main characteristics of EDNOS are the same as those associated with Anorexia and Bulimia:

- Excessive concern about food and weight
- Use of behaviours designed to restrict eating or compensate for eating (such as exercise or purging)
- The disappearance of large amounts of food, long periods of eating, or noticeable blocks of time when the individual is alone
- Many rules about food – e.g. ‘good’ and ‘bad’ foods

### **What age range does this ED affect?**

- EDNOS tends to being in adolescence or early adulthood, although they can occur at any age.

### **Does EDNOS affect both men and women?**

- As with Anorexia and Bulimia, EDNOS is more frequently reported in females. However, where the primary symptom is binge eating the number of males and females is more evenly distributed

### How EDNOS sufferers may feel about themselves:

- The label “not otherwise specified” can leave sufferers feeling that their illness is not taken as seriously as other ED’s
- Low self-esteem
- Self-loathing
- Lonely

### Common character traits among those with EDNOS:

- Low resilience levels

### Possible reasons why someone might develop EDNOS:

- As with Anorexia and Bulimia, the cause is most likely a combination of environmental and biological factors

### Effects of EDNOS:

- Depending on the type of EDNOS, the physical, behavioural and psychological effects are similar to Anorexia, Bulimia, and BED

### What can make the situation worse?

- The situation can be exacerbated when others condemn their behaviour
- This can lead sufferers to feel even more need to gain control through food
- This also confirms their self-persecutory thoughts that they are worthless

### Treatment for EDNOS:

- **One-to-One Therapy - CBT, Interpersonal Psychotherapy, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy:** This can teach sufferers how to fight the compulsion to starve, exchange unhealthy habits for healthy ones, monitor eating and mood, and develop effective stress-management skills
- **Group Therapy/Support Groups:** Self-help diary/support groups or family therapy
- **Nutritional Counselling:** Helping individuals to create a personalised health and well-being plan
- **Medication:** Anti-depressants for low mood
- **Hospitalisation:** In extreme cases, in-patient treatment may be required.