

Bulimia

PROBLEM/SOLUTION

Bulimia is a serious disease that affects all organs of the body, including teeth. An estimated 20 million women and 10 million men suffer from eating disorders such as bulimia. 40-60% of elementary school girls (ages 6-12) are concerned about their weight, and this concern endures throughout life.

Bulimics eat and then deliberately induce vomiting 2-20 times a day. This purging brings up high acid content that washes over the teeth dissolving the tooth structure leaving them worn, thin, weak and sensitive. Even eating a pretzel can cause teeth to crack. Teenagers can lose most of their teeth to this disease.

TALKING POINTS

- A Prosthodontist may be one of the first to see the signs of bulimia when a patient comes in needing help for damaged, brittle teeth. Early detection greatly increases options for saving or restoring your teeth.
- Tooth erosion caused by bulimia often prompts physicians and other dentists to recommend a Prosthodontist.
- The erosion of the enamel not only causes an esthetic issue for the bulimic patient, but it also weakens the individual teeth, making them more vulnerable to cavities and sensitive to things such as hot and cold drinks.
- Brittle, damaged teeth make it difficult to chew solid foods such as vegetables, fish and meat- which contributes to the patient's existing eating disorder and nutrition.
- Restoration of the worn tooth structure by the Prosthodontist is essential to restore oral health and overall well-being. One size does not fit all for bulimia patients. Prosthodontists are specialists in oral health, trained to offer personalized solutions that restore the natural look of the mouth, jaw and smile.
- The esthetic improvements of the smile are critical for these patients who already have a distorted body image issue.
- A Prosthodontist is a specialist with 3-4 additional years of specialty training in oral health care. The resulting expertise includes knowledge of complex medical issues, and of newer, stronger materials and techniques and how to use them in ways that provide natural looking long lasting results for tooth function and esthetics.

Sources: Dr. Ken Kurtz interview, Dr. Glenn Wolfinger reviewed/approved 1-12-15; Allison's story video on GoToAPro.org; National Association of Eating Disorders.

Additional Resources:

Bulimia – Prosthodontists Can Fix Smiles Damaged by Bulimia

- [Video \(Allison's Story\)](#)
- [Letter to the Editor](#)
 - Customize for your local markets
- [Press Release](#)
 - Customize ACP's national version for local markets, blogs or web content
- [New York Times article](#)
- [New York Metro Parents](#) interviews Prosthodontist Dr. Kurtz
- [Journal of Prosthodontics article](#)
[Galindo DF, Butura CC: Immediate Loading of Dental Implants in the Esthetic Region Using Computer-Guided Implant Treatment Software and Stereolithographic Models for a Patient with Eating Disorders. J Prosthodont 2014;23:98–103. doi: 10.1111/jopr.12077](#)