

# Bulimia cases on the rise at health center

Eating disorder accounts for an estimated 30 percent of weight associated problems at health center.

BY ERIN HIMES  
STAFF WRITER

A sudden influx of eating disorder patients at the student health center has UNLV's registered dietician Lisa Cavaretta concerned.

Cavaretta estimated that 30 percent of the students that come to the Health Center for weight-associated problems have bulimia.

Bulimia is the consumption of easily ingested food during a discrete period of time, usually less than two hours, followed by self-induced vomiting, or use of laxatives or diuretics.

Shirley Emerson, Ph.D. at Columbia University, who has conducted numerous studies throughout the United States, cited one done at New York State University.

Of 355 students (78 percent were women and 22 percent were men) an astonishing 28 percent met the criteria for bulimia.

Emerson agrees with the theory that says bulimia is on the rise due, in part, to the increasing pressure to be thin in a weight-conscious society.

Cavaretta said the majority of students have a common fantasy. They believe their lives would be successful if only they were thin and pretty. Other personal qualities are relatively unimportant.

There are also internal prob-

lems that are very damaging to the bodies of victims Cavaretta said.

The frequent vomiting bathes the victims' teeth in hydrochloric acid, which causes gum recession and enamel breakdown, swollen glands and eyes, loss of hair, bloating, sore throats, damage to the esophagus wall, low levels of potassium and minerals which can cause cardiac arrhythmias, heart damage and sometimes severe strokes.

"These symptoms seem to be relatively unimportant, because food has control of their lives, and by eating large quantities of food, then purging, they feel as if they have regained control," Cavaretta said. "It is a false feeling of success."

When bulimics are faced with crisis situations the cycle of bingeing and purging is their means of regaining control.

Lisa Cavaretta,  
UNLV nutritionist

*"People with bulimia need to realize...the only persons they are hurting are themselves."*

starts out as a psychological addiction, an easy way for them to lose weight. But it develops into a physical addiction.

The biggest fallacy of this disease, is that purging eliminates the consumption of unwanted calories.

This is false according to Cavaretta. When foods are consumed, the body fights to retain the calories, therefore most bulimic patients are somewhat overweight.

"People who are bulimic need to realize they didn't kill anyone; they are not abusing drugs or alcohol; the only persons they are hurting are themselves," Cavaretta said.

# Candy bars, caffeine as pick-me-ups, have sluggish results

BY ERIN HIMES  
STAFF WRITER

It's 1 p.m. but it feels like 5. Your eyelids are getting heavy, and your mind is in a fog. What's going on, and what do you do about it?

Probably reach for a quick dose of caffeine or a candy bar.

According to Lisa Cavaretta, a registered dietician at the student health center, this is a temporary remedy that has sluggish results.

Cavaretta said this feeling of sluggishness and fatigue usually occurs after lunch, and few people are immune.

John Palmer of the University of Massachusetts said this feeling is usually characterized by low blood-sugar levels in the body.

A glass of juice is believed to be a potent source of resourceful energy by many, but one eight-ounce glass of apple juice contains the equivalent of more than five teaspoons of plain table sugar. That is more per-ounce than cola. In fact, it's 40 percent more sugar than in a chocolate bar, Palmer said.

In addition, when heading to the snack bar for a pick me up, try to avoid the sugar-laden, "quick-fix" candy bars,

and big-gulp size cokes, which contain 40 teaspoons of sugar.

Palmer said when planning your meals, remember a substantial breakfast is very important. Breakfast should include egg whites, whole grains, lean meats, cottage cheese, cereals and milk or yogurt, instead of a quick donut, pancakes and syrup, or worse, no breakfast at all.

Then go light on lunch. Research studies performed in Sussex, England concluded that people who eat a heavy lunch suffer impaired judgment and are less able to detect signals.

Cavaretta agrees. "Lunch should consist of raw foods like salads, grains, sprouts, beans, tuna, lean meats, seeds and nuts," she said. "If you want to consume your simple sugars, they being sodas and juices, then combine them with solid proteins or starches, like cheeses, crackers or breads."

When eating sugar, the pancreas secretes insulin, often enough to drive the blood level below where it was before anything was eaten.

In addition, when simple sugars are consumed the blood-sugar level goes up quickly, reaching a peak in about one hour. A period of high energy will occur. But for the next hour or so, it's all downhill, said Palmer.

Conversely sugar-related fa-

tigue can occur even though candies and cakes or sodas are never consumed.

Cavaretta said, this occurs because natural sugars in sweet fruits and juices can send blood-sugar levels bouncing around just as easily as the sucrose added to manufactured sweets.

Another alternative to help the afternoon slump comes from Timothy Monk at Montefiore Hospital in New York City. "Vitamin and mineral supplements are a good choice midday," he said. "Many times, the afternoon slump occurs because the supplements people took with breakfast are all used up by mid afternoon."

Some other overlooked factors that contribute to afternoon fatigue may include being sedentary and breathing stale air in classrooms all day. Palmer recommends taking a brisk 10-minute walk, or simply doing 25 jumping jacks. This will force the body to double its intake of oxygen, pump twice the amount of blood through the veins, convert blood fats into blood sugar and raise the metabolic rate from 25 to 75 percent.

What all this adds up to, is renewed energy.

According to the experts, bulimia can never be cured but it can be controlled. There are treatments available for men and women who are bulimic.

UNLV has counselors who can help victims learn a healthier dependence with something other than food.

The Student Health Services

Center is open six days a week and is staffed to provide essential services to the persons in need of help.

## The Rebel Yell

The Rebel Yell is the student newspaper of UNLV. It is published by Southwest Printers, Inc. every Tuesday and Thursday during the school year except holidays.

Opinions expressed within these pages do not necessarily reflect those of the UNLV student body or faculty.

Comments, questions, complaints or letters to the editor may be sent to: The Rebel Yell - STS, 4505 S. Maryland Pkwy., Las Vegas NV 89154; or delivered to The Rebel Yell offices in Room 302 of the Moyer Student Union (third floor). Letters to the editor should be limited to 250 words. The Rebel Yell reserves the right to edit all submissions as necessary.

The Rebel Yell Offices: (702) 739-3478, 3479 and 3878.

Display Advertising: 739-3889.

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## Library

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Use of the library has increased greatly with increases in enrollment. The student body numbered about 10,000 when the library addition opened in 1981. Today the student population is almost 20,000 and the faculty has doubled.

"We are also going through a rapid transition because of new technologies," Simon said. "More and more of our material consists of non-paper media. We need to make these collections more accessible to users."

Simon's goal is a new UNLV library in 1997.

"It is absolutely critical that we stress our needs at the Legislature," Berkley said. "That each of us argues on behalf of our needs with the hope that at the next session we will get attention. If we don't say anything this year, we may not even get it next time. Our best plan is to go on and present our case."

Simon concurred. "I am urging everybody who is interested in this place to realize that this library is just not adequate anymore," he said. "We need more space, more staff and more technology."

The \$40-million estimate is based upon the size needed for this university. The new library, which would be twice as large as the current library, will require almost 400,000 square feet.

"Building requirements are complex due to loading requirements based on weight of books, cost of communications and networking," Simon said.

"The problem now is to maintain currency with our collections, continue to provide for the needs of our students and build a library collection for the future," Simon said.

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