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Teens Must Learn To Live With Eating Binge

Teens: Bulimia is a compulsive disorder in the same category as drug addiction and alcoholism, according to Dr. Miller **Newton**. Quoted in an article in the newsletter of the American Anorexia/Bulimia Association, **Newton** challenges the popularly accepted concept that therapy can eliminate the compulsion.

Bulimia is an eating disorder that involves binge eating. Some bulimics are obese, but many maintain normal weight or below through compulsive means of getting rid of the effect of excess food. The methods may be purging or vomiting or excessive use of laxatives or diuretics.

Newton is a nationally known expert in treating teens whose lives have been destroyed as a result of the use of drugs. His treatment program at KIDS of Bergen County, N.J., which has been successful in rehabilitating young addicts of drugs and alcohol, is now working for teen bulimics, as well.

Newton conceives of bulimia as a compulsive dependency problem that is essentially incurable.

"The person with the problem must learn to live with it," she says. "just as a diabetic learns to take insulin and avoid sugar."

He maintains that under the pressure of severe stress, bulimic episodes may re-



DR. ROBERT WALLACE

Tween 12 and 20

turn. The bulimic then experiences a sense of terrible failure

"Understanding the concept that this is a compulsive dependency offers the adolescent an explanation for the persistence of the compulsion and minimizes the guilt of repeated failure," Newton said.

The guilt must be eliminated, Newton is convinced, if the bulimic is to become free of the behavior. The individual must be aware that the compulsion may return and must learn to live with it without being compelled to repeat the behavior

Although 60 million to 80 million Americans are obese, Newton explained that bulimia is primarily a female disease. Thirty percent of college women and 15 percent of high school girls binge and vomit, he said. And that, dear teens, is a very high percentage of young women who suffer from this serious eating disorder.

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