



Pediatric Loss of Control Eating Disorder

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Editorial

Pediatric loss of control (LOC) eating is that the subjective experience of being unable to regulate what or what proportion one eats, no matter the quantity of food consumed. Whereas classic adult binge episodes are defined by the consumption of unambiguously large amounts of food, LOC eating among youth encompasses the consumption of both large amounts of food and amounts which will not necessarily be large, provided the experience feels out of control. This is often due, in part, to the very fact that it's going to be difficult to work out what constitutes an "objectively" great deal of food among youth who reach puberty at different rates and thus have different nutritional needs. Prevalence of LOC eating ranges from 11% in children to 45%, with higher rates reported among overweight (vs. healthy weight) and adolescent (vs. younger) children.

"Loss of control while eating" refers to a sense that one cannot control what or what proportion one is eating. It can, but doesn't always, involve consuming a strangely great deal of food (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). For instance, a toddler can report feeling out of control while eating a whole container of frozen dessert, or simply one scoop. No matter what proportion food is eaten during a loss of control eating episode, children will often report feeling distressed about being unable to prevent. They'll report feeling out of control once they violate a dietary rule that they were trying to follow or eat foods that they deem unhealthy. Many children report that loss of control eating occurs after some kind of triggering event that caused them to experience low mood, sort of a stressful day at college, or an argument with a parent or friend.

Loss of control eating is one among the foremost commonly reported disordered eating behaviors in children and adolescents, and it's particularly common in youth who have overweight or obesity.

It's often related to other psychological or health-related problems, like depression symptoms and body dissatisfaction, and may cause unhealthy weight gain over time). Although about half children and adolescents who engage in loss of control eating will cease this behavior at later time points, some could also be in danger for developing full syndrome eating disorders, like binge disorder, later in life. Studies of adults who have binge disorder suggest that a lot of struggled with out of control eating for years or maybe decades before seeking treatment. Getting appropriate treatment early may help children avoid years of grappling with their eating and weight.

Because children may engage in loss of control eating episodes secretly (for example, once they are home alone after school, or after everyone has gone to bed), parents aren't always aware that their kids are battling their eating. However, since these behaviors may impact their day to day functioning, it's important for folks to acknowledge some signs and symptoms. Parents may notice large amounts of food missing from the cupboards or might find food wrappers in places where the family doesn't usually have meals (e.g., child's bedroom). Parents may additionally notice that their child is gaining weight sooner than usual, or engaging in other concerning disordered eating behaviors, like strict dieting or maybe purging. Like any worrisome eating behaviors, it's important for folks to speak to their kids about the behaviors they're noticing during a way that doesn't make the kid feel ashamed or embarrassed. Getting angry about missing food can make children feel even more guilty and distressed, which could worsen existing eating problems and cause the kid to be even more secretive about their eating. It's often best for folks to mention their concerns outside of mealtimes, therefore the child doesn't feel self-conscious and should be more hospitable talking. Trying to stress that your child isn't in trouble could also be helpful, as can emphasizing that you simply want to understand what's happening, so you'll find out the simplest thanks to help.

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