

CAMPUS *Health*

Looking at eating binges and other health myths

By Roger McKay

BULIMIA NERVOSA

Are young women in their early to mid-20s so obsessed with body image and body weight that they turn to eating binges followed by periods of fasting or rigorous dieting?

A new study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* indicates that bulimia nervosa is less common than popularly believed. The study estimates the probable prevalence of the condition among American college students nationwide at about 1 percent for women and 0.2 percent for men—compared to some early survey studies that have put the rates as high as 8-19 percent of college women and up to 5 percent of college men.

The study, which sampled students at 53 universities and colleges, found that bulimia was most prevalent (2.2 percent) among undergraduate women living in group housing on campus.

UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTION (THE COMMON COLD)

Any of more than 200 viruses can cause URI. But contrary to popular belief, says the American College Health Association (ACHA), coughing and sneezing are not the main reasons for its spread.

You pick up URI by touching an infected person, such as shaking that person's hand, then touching your eyes or nose. URI viruses attack and multiply in the cells that line the nose and throat, the ACHA says.

You can also pick up a cold by touching a telephone or doorknob or any other hard, nonporous sur-

face after an infected person has touched it.

To keep the bugs at bay, the ACHA advises: "Wash your hands often and avoid touching your face; use disposable tissues (cold viruses can survive for hours on handkerchiefs); eat a balanced diet; avoid prolonged contact with people who have colds; keep your stress level down; keep your room humidity moderate to high."

CHLAMYDIA

New laboratory tests are making it faster and easier to detect this serious health threat, which is caused by a unique species of bacteria called *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

Not usually known is the fact that about 20-40 percent of all sexually active women have probably been exposed to chlamydia at some time, and any sexually active woman (or man) can become infected. One of the most common STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases), chlamydia is more likely to infect young people with more than one sexual partner, women using birth control pills and people infected with gonorrhea or another STD.

According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, symptoms in women may include burning or itching in the genital area, painful or frequent urination and pain in the pelvic area.

Symptoms for men include painful urination, and burning and inflammation of the urethra (the tube from the bladder).

In all cases, it is best to see your doctor if chlamydia is suspected.

OSTEOPOROSIS AND CALCIUM DEFICIENCY

It's an issue for young women (and young men) and not, as usually believed, something just for the elderly to worry about. At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Dr. John Anderson, Director of the Department of Nutrition, is studying the calcium intakes and bone health of 1,200 women between the ages of 18 and 25.

With his colleague, Dr. Frances Tylavsky, Anderson took a detailed dietary history of each woman and with a bone densitometer measured the bone mineral content of the same two bones in each woman—the spongy bone in the wrist and the radius bone of the forearm.

cruited for a two-year study by the Department of Ophthalmology to determine whether vitamins and minerals can slow down the progress of cataracts and macular degeneration, the most common reasons for vision decreases in people 45 or older. Dr. Randall Olson, chairman of the department and principle investigator, says it is believed that the addition of Betakeratine, Vitamin C and Vitamin E to the diet can cut down the incidence of cataracts. Olson warns, however, that all vitamins and minerals, if taken in excess, can cause life threatening complications. . . . Some experts say "blue-blocking" lenses promoted by many manufacturers as the ultimate sunglass lens can actually harm the eyes by not allow-

On how to answer a job interviewer seeking information about potential absenteeism: "I'm in good health and rebound quickly. I've noticed that people who miss a lot of work really don't like their jobs or themselves very well."

*The Complete Q&A Job Interview Book
by Jeffrey G. Allen (John Wiley & Sons)*

During adolescence, when dieting becomes an issue, many girls replace their intake of milk and other foods rich in calcium for other things, and this has an adverse effect on calcium absorption, he says. "This interferes severely with the proper formation of bone mass in the years when it is most essential, because in adolescence bone mass increases at a rate of 10 percent a year."

EYE NOTES

At the University of Utah, hundreds of volunteers are being re-

ing true color perception. Also note: the darkness of a lens is not an indication of its ability to protect the eyes, as many of us think. Eyes covered by a very dark lens could still be vulnerable to ultraviolet ray damage from the sun. Ask for lenses with a UV inhibitor injected into the lens material. . . . Playing a major role in the latest advance in rigid gas permeable contact lenses: fluorine, the anti-stick ingredient in frying pans. Fluorine, it seems, resists protein deposits and results in greater comfort than rigid lenses. USA