

Body Dysmorphic Disorder

Body dysmorphia is defined as a mental disorder in which an individual obsesses over one or more parts of their body, which can result in repeatedly checking their body in the mirror, excessive grooming and seeking reassurance. The perceived flaw and repetitive behaviors can cause severe distress and can impact an individual's ability to function in everyday life.



Signs & Symptoms

Body dysmorphia usually starts in the teenage years and can affect both males and females. Individuals diagnosed with body dysmorphia usually have significant social impairment that can result in little or no friends and very limited social interactions. Common behaviors usually occur for multiple hours each day and are difficult to resist or control. Common behaviors of individuals with body dysmorphia may include:

- Frequent mirror checking
- Comparing one's body or appearance to others
- Excessive grooming or camouflaging with hats, clothes, makeup
- Eating a restrictive diet
- Skin picking

Causes & Risk Factors

There is no specific cause of body dysmorphia, but it can develop from a combination of genetics, and environmental factors. There are multiple risk factors that can increase a person's chance of developing body dysmorphia. Risk factors may include:

- Trauma or bullying as a child
- Having anxiety or depression
- Societal expectations
- Personality traits such as perfectionism

Diagnosis & Treatment

Body dysmorphia can be difficult to diagnose because many people do not want to talk about their symptoms due to fear or shame. Diagnosis is based on a clinical assessment, and examination of one's medical, family, and social history. Treatment plans can consist of a combination of cognitive behavioral therapy and medication.

Sources – World Psychiatry: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1414653/> and Mayo Clinic: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/body-dysmorphic-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20353938>