



# Body Dysmorphic Disorder

## **What is Body Dysmorphic Disorder?**

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Body Dysmorphic Disorder is a type of anxiety disorder where a part of a person's physical features or attributes provoke intense anxiety and negative distorted beliefs about a part of their appearance. When others tell them they look fine or that the flaw isn't noticeable, people with BDD don't hear or believe it due to their preoccupation with their perceived flaw eg their skin is pale, their hair is too curly, their nose is too long.

This disorder is thought to be caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain, which may be genetically based. A person with a family history of generalised anxiety disorder or obsessive compulsive disorder is more prone to develop this type of problem. Also those coming from a family with an upward socio-economic status seen to be more at risk of developing this disorder.

## **Symptoms and Signs**

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- Frequently comparing the appearance of the perceived defect with that of others.
- Frequently checking appearance of specific part in mirrors and other reflective surfaces.
- Camouflaging the perceived defect with clothing, makeup, hats, hands, or posture.
- Seeking surgery, dermatological treatment, or other medical treatment when doctors or other people have said that the flaws are minimal or nonexistent or that such treatment isn't necessary.
- Seeking reassurance about the flaw or attempting to convince others of its ugliness.
- Excessive grooming  
(for example, combing hair, shaving, removing or cutting hair, applying makeup)
- Avoiding mirrors.
- Frequently touching the perceived defect.
- Picking one's skin
- Measuring the disliked body part.
- Excessively reading about the perceived defective body part.
- Avoiding social situations in which the perceived defect might be exposed.
- Feeling anxious and self-conscious around other people because of the perceived defect.