



Night Eating Syndrome

Night eating syndrome (NES) is characterized by lack of appetite in the morning, overeating at night, and waking from sleep to eat. NES is not recognized as a distinct disorder in the DSM-5, but it is categorized as “Other Specified Feeding and Eating Disorder,” meaning that it does not meet the criteria for a specific disorder but does cause significant distress or impairment.¹

Its prevalence is estimated to be 1.1% to 1.5% in the general population and 6% to 15% in people with obesity.²

Diagnostic criteria include recurrent episodes of night eating, either after dinner or after waking from sleep; eating at least 20%-25% of daily food after the evening meal; being aware of episodes of night eating; and distress or impairment resulting from the behavior.²

NES is not widely recognized by clinicians. The Night Eating Questionnaire, a 14-item self-reported questionnaire, can help clinicians identify patients with NES.

NES should be distinguished from sleep-related eating disorder (SRED). In SRED people eat compulsively while “sleepwalking” and have no memory of the event after waking.

NES has complex associations with obesity, psychiatric disorders, sleep problems, and metabolic disturbances.

1. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. 5th ed. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association; 2013;350-353.
2. Kucukgoncu S, et al. *Neuropsychiatr Dis Treat*. 2015;11:7510760.