

## Food and health issues

Along with air, sun, and water, food is one of the most important things for people. It is not a surprise, then, that there are many different problems people can have because of food.



We all get hungry now and then. However, even in the 21st century, there are people who do not have enough food to survive. In the past, long periods of hunger were usually caused by wars, illnesses, or weather. Today, about 10% of all people on the planet do not have enough food. This is why we have many organizations devoted to hunger relief. At the global level, the UN works towards the 2030 goal for "Zero hunger".



Food poisoning is an illness you get when you eat food that has bacteria, viruses or parasites. Symptoms often include feeling ill, vomiting or diarrhoea. Food poisoning is usually not serious, but some people need to go to the hospital.



Food allergy and intolerance are similar, but not the same. If you have a food allergy, your immune system will react, and the symptoms can be serious: choking, rash, swelling, and even fainting. Food intolerance often causes only digestive problems. You will not feel well in the stomach or intestines, but there are rarely other, more serious problems.



A person with an eating disorder thinks about food, eating, body shape and weight most of the time.

**Anorexia** is one of the most common eating disorders. People with anorexia fear to gain weight and therefore do not eat enough.

**Bulimia** is another problem, in which a person overeats, but then vomits, takes laxatives or exercises too much, so as not to get fat. Binge eaters eat more and faster than usual, even when they are not hungry. They cannot stop until they are full.

### Questions and tasks:

- 1 Did you ever hear about any of these problems? Which ones?
- 2 Which of the issues from the text come from the environment, and which from our own bodies?
- 3 Are there any small steps you can do to help people with these problems?
- 4 Have a class discussion:  
Thinking about question number 3, which food-related problems were easier, and which were more difficult?
- 5 Do a research on one or all these issues:  
Where do people suffer from hunger the most?  
What steps can you take not to get food poisoning?  
Which foods are people most allergic to?  
What are the main causes for eating disorders?