

Eating Disorders

Behavioral Health Tips

Eating Disorders are illnesses that affect up to 5% of the population in developed nations at any given time. Eating disorders are more common in women, often start during middle-to-late adolescence and most commonly occur in families with other members who have eating disorders. There are multiple types of eating disorders, which reflect how much someone eats, how normal someone's weight is, what types of foods they eat and avoid, and how they feel about their body and eating disorder. Eating disorders are most often found in individuals who have other psychiatric diagnoses.

Types of Eating Disorders:

Common Eating Disorders include:

- Anorexia Nervosa: a disorder in which individuals have unhealthy body weight, an obsessive fear of gaining weight or refusal to do so, and an unrealistic perception, or non-recognition of the seriousness, of current low body weight.
- Bulimia Nervosa: a disorder in which individuals eat large portions followed by compensatory behaviors such as vomiting, using laxatives or exercising excessively. These individuals often have normal body weights.
- Binge Eating Disorder: a disorder in which individuals overeat typically at least once weekly with significant remorse after these binges.
- Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID): a disorder of "picky eating" in which individuals typically have eclectic patterns of food consumption that can lead to nutritional and energy deficits.

For more information

Cohen Children's Medical Center

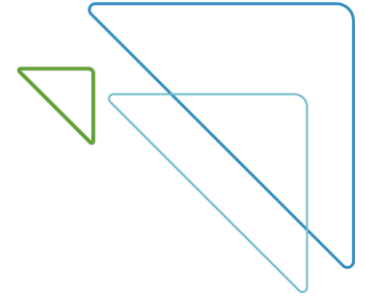
Pediatric Behavioral Health- Rockville Centre
100 Merrick Road
Rockville Centre, NY 11570
516-927-1630
Pediatric Behavioral Health- Mineola
156 First Street
Mineola, NY 11501
516-321-5770

Warning Signs:

Children with Eating Disorders all share an atypical relationship with food. Observant parents can pick up when children start eating differently—they are skipping meals, decreasing the amount of food they consume, or they are avoiding certain foods that they previously liked. Some children will play with their food or move it around their plate to make it look like they consumed more than they did. Parents can also notice children who are increasing exercise or going to the bathroom right after mealtime. Eating disorders can lead children to lie or omit truths in an effort to conceal their habits, which they often feel ashamed of. Depending on the severity of the illness, children can be managed in outpatient clinics, in day programs or may require overnight residential programs to work on healthy eating habits. Children often need frequent encouragement to eat correctly; various treatment modalities often encompass family-based methods to get everyone working together to help the child eat. If children become medically unstable, they may need to be admitted to a medical hospital to get their weight and metabolism back on track.



Pediatric Behavioral Health



How Parents Can Help:

Eating disorders can be very hard to detect and even harder to treat. Children with eating disorders are often skilled in explaining away their eating changes and seeming ambivalent to receive help. Parents who notice their child with a suspected eating disorder should engage their child directly and set expectations about how and when their child should be eating. It can be helpful to see a pediatrician early to get baseline weight and laboratory measurements. Mental health professionals can also help teach parents and children strategies to decrease episodes and intensity of disordered eating.

Treatments:

Treatments for eating disorders are often specific to the disorder. Individuals with anorexia need to focus on adequate calorie consumption. Frequent medical visits are often prescribed. Therapists teach families to work as a team to support and help motivate the child with the eating disorder. Medications are sometimes used to increase appetite. Individuals with bulimia work on behavioral strategies to decrease overeating and minimize opportunities to purge. Sometimes medications can be helpful. Individuals with other specific food avoidances often use exposure therapy to desensitize them to various food options.

Additional Information:

CCMC Eating Disorder Program 718-470-4747

CCMC Adolescent Medicine 718-465-3270

Pediatrics.northwell.edu

Eating Disorder Hope:

<https://www.eatingdisorderhope.com/recovery/support-groups>

Overeaters Anonymous:

<https://oa.org/>

National Eating Disorders Association:

<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa & Related Disorders:

<https://anad.org/>

F.E.A.S.T. (Families Empowered and Supporting Treatment of Eating Disorders)

<https://www.feast-ed.org/>

Recommended Books for Families About Eating Disorders:

How to Nourish Your Child Through an Eating Disorder

Authors: Casey Crosby and Wendy Sterling

What Every Parent Needs to Know About Eating Disorders

Authors: Tonja Krautter

Help Your Teenager Beat an Eating Disorder, First Edition

Authors: James Lock and Daniel Le Grange

Life without Ed: How One Woman Declared Independence from Her Eating Disorder and How You Can Too

Authors: Jenny Schaefer and Thom Rutledge

Apps

Recovery Record: Eating Disorder Management- free

Rise Up + Recover- free