

# Heads Up for Wellbeing – Eating Disorders

Find out more information about eating disorders here.



## What are eating disorders?

- Eating disorders are mental health problems that involve disordered eating behaviour - this can include eating too little or too much or becoming fixated with one's weight or shape. Men and women of any age can get an eating disorder, but they most commonly affect young women aged 13 to 17 years old. Eating disorders are not simply about food; the behaviours that accompany them may often serve as a coping mechanism or a way to feel in control.

- Types of eating disorders include:

- ⑩ anorexia
- ⑩ ARFID
- ⑩ binge eating disorder
- ⑩ bulimia
- ⑩ other specified feeding or eating disorder (OSFED)

## Types of eating disorders

### Anorexia nervosa

If you get an anorexia diagnosis, this is because you are not eating enough food to get the energy you need to stay healthy. Sometimes people assume anorexia is just about slimming and dieting, but it is much more than this. At its core it is often connected to very [low self-esteem](#), negative self-image and feelings of intense distress.

### ARFID - Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder?

Avoidant restrictive food intake disorder, more commonly known as ARFID, is a condition characterised by the person avoiding certain foods or types of food, having restricted intake in terms of overall amount eaten, or both

### Binge eating disorder

If you have binge eating disorder you might feel that you can't stop yourself from eating, even if you want to. It is sometimes described as compulsive eating. If you experience binge eating disorder, you might rely on food to make you feel better or to hide difficult feelings.

### Bulimia nervosa

If you experience bulimia, you may find that you eat large amounts of food in one go because you feel upset or worried (binging). You may then feel guilty or ashamed after binging and want to get rid of the food you have eaten (purging).

### Other specified feeding and eating disorder

If you are given a diagnosis of OSFED it means that you have an eating disorder but you don't meet all the criteria for a diagnosis of anorexia, bulimia or binge eating disorder. This doesn't mean that your eating disorder is less serious, it just means that it doesn't fit into current diagnostic categories. You might experience any of the behaviours, feelings and body changes associated with other eating disorders.

## Signs to look out for

It can often be very difficult to identify that a loved one or friend has developed an eating disorder.

Warning signs to look out for include:

- dramatic weight loss
- lying about how much and when they have eaten, or how much they weigh
- eating a lot of food very fast
- going to the bathroom a lot after eating, often returning looking flushed
- excessively or obsessively exercising
- avoiding eating with others
- cutting food into small pieces or eating very slowly
- wearing loose or baggy clothes to hide **their weight loss**

Read below to find out more information about eating disorders and how you can support



## What causes eating disorders?

We do not know exactly what causes eating disorders.

You may be more likely to get an eating disorder if:

- you or a member of your family has a history of eating disorders, depression, or alcohol or drug addiction
- you have been criticised for your eating habits, body shape or weight
- you're overly concerned with being slim, particularly if you also feel pressure from society or your job – for example, ballet dancers, jockeys, models or athletes
- you have anxiety, low self-esteem, an obsessive personality or are a perfectionist
- you have been sexually abused

## Eating Disorders – useful contacts – where to get help

Supports available in school/out with school For Pupils/Parents:

- Talking to your child's pastoral teacher about your concerns
- Contacting your GP
- They can help you get the correct support

BEAT

- The charity BEAT is an organisation that provides support and advice lines as well as a range of online resources about eating disorders.
- <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

NHS

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Eating-disorders/>
- Find out information on types of eating disorders, warning signs, getting help for yourself or someone else and what causes eating disorders.

Social Media - Facebook

- Facebook - follow 'Eating disorders Support'
- you can find out useful information and find out about other people's stories by going onto the page
- useful information and reminders can appear on your newsfeed.

Other useful websites

- <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/eating-problems/types-of-eating-disorders/>
- Anorexia & Bulimia Care: <https://www.anorexiabulimiacare.org.uk/>