

Eating Disorders- Where to go for support

Information from Liverpool CAMHS

Where to go for support

If you believe your child has an eating disorder start by having a discussion with them, however, this must be kept sensitive and non- judgemental (Eating Disorders are very secretive). Seek support from your GP or the CAMHS Eating Disorder Young Person Service (EDYS) who can help and advise you on the next steps.



Eating disorder in children and young people

Signs your child might be experiencing an eating disorder

Thoughts and Feelings

They may verbally say that they feel fat, ugly and feel not good enough. They also may tell you they are constantly thinking about food and fixated with food.

Behaviours

Distorted perception of body shape and weight, obsessive behaviour attached to eating such as counting calories or cutting food up into small pieces, secrecy, difficulty sleeping, wearing baggy clothes, vomiting, taking laxatives or diet pills, excessive exercise. Saying they have eaten earlier or will eat later. Strict dieting and avoiding food they think is fattening. Missing meals (fasting). Avoiding eating with other people. Hiding food. Eating very slowly. Social withdrawal and isolating. Making themselves sick. Calluses on the backs of the hands if fingers are used to cause vomiting and smelly breath from vomiting. Hoarding food, empty food wrappers found.

Physical Symptoms

Substantial weight loss or weight gain, constipation, abdominal pains, dizzy spells, feeling faint or in fact fainting, lethargy, bloated stomach, poor blood circulation making them feel cold, dry skin and delayed puberty.

Ways you can support your child/ young person experiencing an eating disorder

- If they are not ready to talk about their problem, reassure them that you will be there when they are ready. However, don't leave it too long to broach the subject again. Remember eating disorders thrive on secrecy.
- If they acknowledge that they need help, encourage/ help them to seek it as quickly as possible.
- If they tell you there's nothing wrong, even if they seem convincing, keep an eye on them and keep in mind that they may be ill, even if they didn't realise it. Denial that there's a problem is common- you were worried for a reason so trust your judgement.
- Prepare what you want to say and how you're going to say it.
- Avoid talking just before or after mealtimes as this can be the most anxiety-provoking time.
- Say, "I am worried" rather than "you need to get help".
- Don't be disheartened if you are met with a negative response as the illness affects how the person thinks.
- Don't label them, "I think you have an eating disorder".
- Don't be judgemental or confrontational.
- Avoid shaming them and telling them they are being "silly" or ask "what did you do that for".