

At the EHS, we treat young people who are concerned about their weight or shape and may be restricting their food intake or bingeing. If young people are at risk of developing a serious eating disorder, losing weight rapidly or experiencing health complications they will be referred to the specialist service at South West London & St Georges Eating Disorders service for assessment and treatment.

Still have questions?

www.b-eat.co.uk

www.mirror-mirror.org/child

Contact

The Emotional Health Service

42 York Street, Twickenham TW1 3BW

T: 020 8487 5470

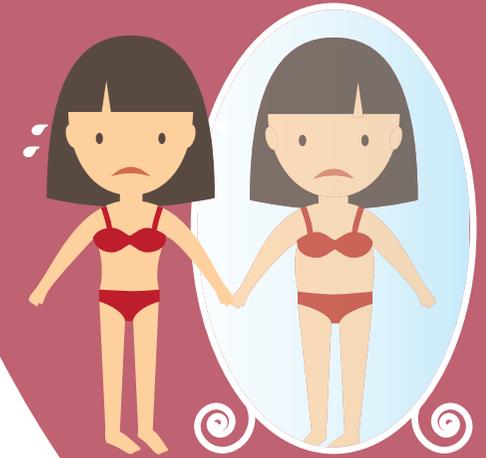
Opening hours:

Monday to Thursday: 8.45am to 5.00pm

Friday: 8.45am to 4.45 pm

W: www.afcinfo.org.uk/emotionalhealthservice

Emotional Health Service



Body image and eating concerns

Information for young people about anorexia and bulimia

What are eating disorders?

Eating disorders affect both boys and girls and people from all different cultures. Eating or body image concerns cause young people to worry about weight, shape, or food. When young people worry about these things and try to change their weight or shape in an extreme way by dieting, skipping meals, over-exercising or over eating this could mean that they have an eating disorder.

These are the three most common eating disorders:

- **Anorexia:** causes people to worry about being fat or wanting to be thin, no matter what their weight actually is. They may try and lose weight by eating very little or exercising a lot.
- **Bulimia:** also causes people to worry about their weight. They may swap between eating nothing and eating lots (bingeing) then vomiting or taking laxatives to control their weight.
- **Emotional Overeating:** eating large amounts of food in response to negative emotions rather than physical hunger. This kind of eating is used as a way of coping with, or silencing, a range of negative emotions.

Signs of an eating disorder

- Thinking about their weight, shape or looks a lot
- Finding excuses not to eat in front of other people such as being busy every lunch time
- Large amounts of food disappearing from the kitchen or being thrown away after meals
- Weight changes or changes in menstrual cycles
- Going to the bathroom straight after meals
- Spending a lot of time exercising or using laxatives or weight control medication

- Finding it hard to concentrate in school, college or work
- Feeling withdrawn from social relationships or becoming over dependent on certain relationships for support

It is tricky to tell when healthy eating and exercising turns into something worrying. If worries about eating or exercising are stopping you from being happy and living your life as normal or if you are losing weight fast, it is important to talk to someone about this. Eating disorders can both be life-threatening and can become harder to treat the longer they are left unchecked.

What causes eating disorders?

There are lots of different reasons why an eating disorder may appear:

- as a way of controlling a part of life when other areas feel unpredictable or stressful
- stress leading to comfort eating then worries about being fat
- difficult events triggering times of low mood or high anxiety

Some people are more at risk than others for different reasons such as:

- being previously overweight and lacking self-esteem
- being sensitive or anxious
- struggling to become independent or struggling with change

What help is available to me?

Psychological therapies are recommended in most cases of eating disorders. This can take the form of individual therapy or family therapy. Physical treatments such as nutritional support can be offered in conjunction to talking therapies.