

Children and young people with eating disorders



Guidelines for primary care professionals

These guidelines share advice about spotting the signs of eating disorders and when to refer children and young people to the community eating disorders service (CEDS) for specialist outpatient support.



Remember to refer ALL suspected children and young people with eating disorders to your local CEDS

- History of weight loss (> 1kg a week for 2 consecutive weeks) or failure to gain weight
- If no weight available has clothes size changed?
- Have parents noticed weight loss?
- How long has the young person been trying to lose weight & what have they tried?
- If they are bingeing, vomiting, using laxatives, how often in a week?
- How much are they currently eating & drinking?
- Are they over exercising?
- If appropriate, when did they last have a menstrual cycle?
- Have parents noticed secret eating?
- History of weight gain above expected developmental gains
- Any risks?



Children and young people DO NOT need to be underweight for a referral

'Low weight' is now defined as a loss of 10% of a young person's expected body weight

Please remember weight loss is not the only indication of a potential eating disorder



Timescales

Following referral for urgent cases treatment will start **within 1 week** and **within 4 weeks** for routine cases (note this is primarily family-based treatment rather than individual).

CONSENT

- Are both the young person & parent(s) aware of this referral?
- Who has given consent to this referral?



Include the physical exam

- Weight and height
- BP and pulse (sitting and standing)
- Temperature
- **Send for blood tests at same time as referral:**
FBC, U+E's, LFT, ESR, TFT, bone profile, Calcium, Magnesium
- DO NOT DELAY REFERRAL WAITING FOR RESULTS!**



When to refer

Refer ALL children and young people with a suspected eating disorder to your local CEDS

- Anxiety about gaining weight - behaviours to lose weight that are more than a 'teenage diet' such as extreme restricting or frequent bingeing
- Low, normal or overweight with the above behaviours
- Fainting, dehydration and confusion



RED FLAGS - Direct the child or young person to their local A&E or Paediatric Unit *and* inform your local specialist CYP Eating Disorder Team

- Not eating and fluid refusal for more than 24 hours
- Cardiovascular compromise and fainting
- Median BMI of less than 70%
- BP <0.4th centile
- Pulse <40 bpm sitting
- Temperature <35°C

For further information please refer to Junior MARSIPAN guidance.

Eating disorders. Know the first signs?



Lips

Are they obsessive about food?



Flips

Is their behaviour changing?



Hips

Do they have distorted beliefs about their body size?



Kips

Are they often tired or struggling to concentrate?



Nips

Do they disappear to the toilet after meals?



Skips

Have they started exercising excessively?

Online support

Visit beateatingdisorders.org.uk for information about eating disorders, and to access online support groups and one-to-one chat.

Use helpfinder.beateatingdisorders.org.uk to find services in your area.

@BeatEDSupport

IBeatEDSupport

[beat.eating.disorders](https://www.facebook.com/beat.eating.disorders)

**Beat is the UK's eating disorder charity.
We are a champion, guide and friend
for anyone affected by an eating disorder.**

YOUR LOCAL EATING DISORDER SERVICE

CONTACT

Harrogate and Northallerton (via Dragon Parade Clinic)

01423 726900

York and Scarborough (via Lime Trees)

01904 615300



HELPLINE

0808 801 0677



YOUTHLINE

0808 801 0711



STUDENTLINE

0808 801 0811

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys



NHS Foundation Trust

Email support

The Beat Adult email support is open to anyone over 18:
help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk ✉

The Beat Studentline email support is open to all students:
studentline@beateatingdisorders.org.uk ✉

The Beat Youthline email support is open to anyone under 18:
fyp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk ✉

Parents, teachers or any concerned adults should call the adult helpline.