

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders can affect anyone. They are complicated and can be difficult to spot. If you think you might be having problems with your eating. Or feel that difficult feelings or situations are making you change your eating habits. Or you feel differently about food, you could have an eating disorder, or be developing one.

[Speak to your doctor or GP](#) if you are worried.

What is an Eating Disorder?

An eating disorder is when someone attempts to cope with difficult feelings by controlling how much food they eat. This is known as unhealthy eating behaviours. This can include: eating too much or too little and worrying about your body size and shape.

Eating disorders are more common in children and young people. But anyone can get an eating disorder.

With treatment, it is possible to recover from an eating disorder. There is help and support available if you are worried that you or someone you care about is having problems with eating.

[Read more from the NHS about Eating Disorders](#)

Types of eating disorder

Understanding that you have an eating disorder is the first step to recovery. There are different types of eating disorder. There are signs and symptoms to look out for in yourself and others.

[Eating Distress North East](#) has a series of videos to help you recognise the signs and symptoms.

Anorexia

Anorexia is where you don't eat enough food to stay healthy. You may worry about your weight and body shape a lot. You want to lose weight and eat less and less food. Symptoms include:

- extreme fear of gaining weight
- excessive or compulsive exercising
- becoming obsessed with diets and calories
- believing you are fat when you are a healthy weight or underweight

Physical signs may include:

- weakness in the muscles
 - difficulty sleeping and fatigue
 - irregular or stopped periods or puberty
 - growth of soft feathery hair (lanugo) on body
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Bulimia

Bulimia is an eating disorder where you overeat and then make yourself sick or use laxatives to try to get rid of the food. Symptoms can include:

- eating a large amount of food in a short amount of time. This is known as bingeing
- experiencing feelings of guilt, shame or anxiety after eating
- fixation with weight and body shape
- being sick after eating
- using diet pills or laxatives to control weight

Physical signs may include:

- vomiting
 - stomach pain or problems
 - damage to teeth
 - irregular or stopped periods
 - enlarged salivary glands
 - electrolyte imbalance, such as sodium or potassium
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Binge eating disorder

Binge eating disorder involves eating when you're not hungry or when you can't stop when you've had enough food. Some people describe it as an uncontrollable addiction to food.

Symptoms include eating:

- quicker than usual
- even when you're full
- when you're not hungry
- alone or in secret
- history of dieting
- feeling guilty, disgusted or upset after bingeing

Physical signs include:

- tiredness
- difficulty sleeping

- weight gain
 - bloating
 - constipation
 - stomach pain or stomach ulcers
 - poor skin condition
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Other specified feeding or eating disorders (OSFED)

Not everyone will fit the patterns that are described above. There are other eating disorders which include:

- **Avoidant or Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID)** where people avoid eating certain foods or eating altogether. This may be because they don't like the smell, taste or texture of certain foods. Or they have had a problem or upsetting experience after eating such as, choking or being sick.
- **Psychological disorder:** eating things that are not foods, such as dirt, stones, cigarette ash and chalk, known as PICA
- **Night Eating Syndrome** which are recurrent episodes of night eating

[Read more about OSFED on the Beat website](#)

Local help and support

[Eating Distress North East](#) offer a confidential service for people experiencing difficulties around food, as well as for their families and professionals. They provide information, advice and signposting, as well as support groups, training and counselling.

[NHS Newcastle Talking Therapies](#) can help you to talk about your feelings. You can contact them directly to get one to one support with therapists and wellbeing practitioners, to take part in workshops and groups based on cognitive behavioural therapy. They also have online treatment options, which are accessible from your smart phone, tablet or computer at home, any time of the day or night.

[Cumbria, Northumberland Tyne and Wear Trust \(CNTW\)](#) run an eating disorders service for children and young people.

[Beat Eating Disorders](#) is a national telephone helpline and online information and advice service. They will listen to you, help you to understand the illness, and support you to take positive steps towards recovery. They can also support your family and friends.

Read more on InformationNOW about:

- [support groups](#)
- [mental health support](#)

With thanks to Eating Distress North East for their support with this information.

Useful Organisations

Eating Distress North East

Email: enquiries@edne.org.uk

Website: <https://www.edne.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 221 0233

Address: Units 4/5, NE1 5DW

Children and Young People's service (CYPS) – Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW)

Email: NGCYPS@cntw.nhs.uk

Website: <https://www.cntw.nhs.uk/services/children-young-peoples-service-newcastle-gateshead/>

Telephone: 0191 246 6913

Address: Benton House, NE2 1QE

NHS Newcastle Talking Therapies

Website: <https://www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk/nhs-services/nhs-mental-health/newcastle/>

Telephone: 0330 0534 230

Address: Rotterdam House, NE1 3DY

Beat Eating Disorders

Email: help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk

Telephone: 0330 0534 230

Address: Beat, Unit 1 Chalk Hill House , NR1 1SZ

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