

Eating disorders

Advice and Support for Parents and Guardians.

- An eating disorder is a serious mental health condition that can lead to serious physical illness.
- Many young people develop unhealthy relationships with food. This can start from as young as primary and can affect anyone with any body shape or lifestyle – regardless of their gender, culture, age or ethnicity.
- There is no one reason for developing an eating disorder and the sufferer can often be keen to hide the condition, or maybe unaware of it themselves.
- There are different forms of eating disorders.
- It is important that the sufferer receives professional support as soon as possible.
- There is often a lot of shame around eating disorders, and it is important that the family understands how important their support is in the recovery process.
- An eating disorder is no one's fault.
- Support is freely available and once a young person receives support there is a good recovery rate.

If you suspect that your child is struggling with their relationship with food, even if you are unsure, then speak gently to them and ask for advice from your GP or school's mental health Lead.

Signs that your child maybe developing an eating disorder.

- Becoming more controlling or limiting about what, how much or when they eat – including avoiding eating with other people.
- Obsessing about their body shape, having an inaccurate view of their body shape, or feeling afraid of putting on weight.
- Leaving the table quickly after meals (for example to hide food or be sick)
- Exercising a lot, or much more than they used to.
- Seeming different in themselves – including seeming more tired than usual or finding it difficult to concentrate.
- Acting withdrawn, down or irritable, along side physical signs.
- Wearing loose or baggy clothes to hide their weight loss.
- Losing or gaining weight
- Ideas of perfectionism, alongside physical signs.

It can be a worrying time for families of young people, and young people, experiencing eating disorders.

- At EMAT our learners are taught about healthy eating and about eating disorders.
- Help is available through: **GP, school and specialist professional services.**

Information and Support

YOUNGMINDS

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/eating-disorders/#Whatareeatingdisorders>



<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

Local Support



Children and Young People Community Eating Disorder Service -The Brambles

<https://www.nhft.nhs.uk/cyped>

