



EATING DISORDERS

Sutton

What are eating disorders?

Anorexia Nervosa is characterised by significant weight loss (leading to a body weight of less than 85% of healthy weight) through suppressing the urge to eat.

Bulimia Nervosa is characterised by binge eating. Binge eating means eating unusually large amounts of food in relatively short amount of time, often accompanied by a feeling of being out of control. The bingeing is often followed by 'purging.' This is an attempt to "get rid" of everything through self-induced vomiting or the abuse of laxatives. People may also try to get rid of calories by exercising excessively.

Both Bulimia and Anorexia Nervosa result from the person's fears about acceptable body weight and fears of fatness. Anorexia and Bulimia Nervosa occur in around 1 in 100 women. Approximately 10% of people diagnosed are men.

While the two disorders are often thought of as being different, they are closely related. It is possible to have features of both anorexia and bulimia, or to have some, but not all of the features of one of the conditions

Why do people develop eating disorders?

There is no one answer to this question. There are many factors that may trigger the development of an eating disorder, but generally speaking eating disorders are not only about food and weight but are linked with unhappiness, low self esteem and emotional control.

Treatments for Eating Disorders

Resolving an eating disorder can be difficult. Often someone with an eating disorder will have very mixed feelings about changing – while they may feel they want to change they may fear making that change. It takes a lot of courage to resolve eating disorders and it can often feel safer not to do so.

Currently the most effective treatment for eating disorders is psychological therapy. Social and medical support may also be useful for some people.

Symptoms related to eating disorders

People with eating disorders may experience some or all of the features of anorexia and/or bulimia nervosa.

Below are some of the symptoms that may be experienced:

Restricted eating

- Sleeping badly and feeling restless
- Difficulty concentrating or thinking clearly
- Being preoccupied with thoughts of food
- Feeling low in mood (depressed)
- Finding it harder to eat
- Feeling tired, weak and slow as your body's metabolism slows down
- Becoming constipated or bloated, experiencing stomach cramps
- Absence of your periods (amenorrhoea)
- Developing brittle bones (osteoporosis)
- Vitamin and mineral deficiencies, such as anaemia
- Muscle wasting possibly leading to organ failure

Binging

Binge eating is uncontrollable and excessive eating. It can happen on its own or alongside with purging. Binge-eating often happens in secrecy, and is associated with feelings of shame, disgust or guilt.

People who binge-eat may put on weight and may lead to obesity related disorders such as Type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure, gall bladder and heart disease.

Purging

Purging includes self-induced vomiting and the abuse of laxatives.

- Erosion of tooth
- A swollen face
- Irregular heart-beats or palpitations
- Feeling weak and tired
- Kidney damage
- Difficulty opening bowels without using laxatives
- Huge weight swings

A diagnosis should only be made by a mental health specialist.



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Treatments for Eating Disorders in Sutton

For bulimia, your GP may refer you to Psychological Therapies in Primary Care (PTiPC) for psychological assessment, where you may be offered guided self-help or individual psychological therapy.

For anorexia and enduring bulimia, your GP may refer you to the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) who will assess your needs and how best to meet them. Treatment may include psychological, medical, and social support. The CMHT may refer you to specialist eating disorder services, if appropriate.

Useful sources of support

There is a lot of information about mental health available on the Internet and in books. Occasionally these are not from reliable sources and may provide mis-information. While service users and mental health professionals have recommended these websites, books and services, we cannot guarantee their quality nor can we take responsibility for the impact that the resources and services will have on you. The websites and books listed here are not an exhaustive list.

Websites

- www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions/mental_health/disorders_eating.shtml
- www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/
- www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinformation/mentalhealthproblems/eatingdisorders/eatingdisorders.aspx
- www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinformation/therapies/cognitivebehaviouraltherapy.aspx

Books

- Understanding Eating Disorders (Family Doctor) by Dr B Palmer and D Eastbury ISBN-10: 1898205744
- Overcoming Anorexia Nervosa by Christopher Freeman and Peter Cooper
- Overcoming Binge Eating by C. Fairburn ISBN 0-89862-179-
- Bulimia Nervosa and Binge-eating: A Guide to Recovery (Robinson Family Health Series) by Peter J. Cooper ISBN: 1854871714
- Appetite for Life: Inspiring Stories of Recovery from Anorexia, Bulimia, and Compulsive Overeating by Margie Ryerson ISBN: 059534755X

Local non-NHS services Your GP will also be able to advise you of local services and how to contact them

Eating Disorders Association

Provides support and understanding about eating disorders

Youthline (for callers 18 years and under)- 0845 634 7650 (Mondays-Fridays 4.00 pm to 6.30 pm)

Adult Helpline – 0845 634 1414 (Mondays to Fridays 8.30 am to 8.30 pm)

Email: talkback@edauk.com

Website: www.edauk.com

Private Therapy

If you are interested in seeking private therapy it is recommended that you find a therapist through one of these professional bodies:

British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies www.babcp.com

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy www.bacp.co.uk/seeking_therapist/index.html

British Psychological Society www.bps.org.uk/e-services/find-a-psychologist/psychoindex.cfm

Other Useful Numbers

SaneLine: 0845 767 8000 (Monday- Sunday 1-11pm)

Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90 (everyday, 24 hours)

NHS Direct: 0845 46467 (every day, 24 hours)

Mental Health Helpline: 0500 639 000

There are other voluntary services in Sutton that may be useful but not directly linked to eating disorders, please ask your GP for more information.