

Where to get help

It is usually very difficult for people with eating disorders to get better on their own. It is important that you find professional help and support as soon as possible. It's a good idea to [talk to your child about their eating disorder](#) before seeking medical help.

Gaining access to treatment on the NHS can sometimes take longer than you might expect or hope. In these instances there are many self-help support services on offer to use while waiting for NHS treatment. Have a look at the resources at the bottom of this page.

Make an appointment with your GP

The first port of call when looking for help is always through your GP. It's important to get young children into treatment for their eating disorder. There is every chance they will protest and although it's difficult, don't give in: they need to get professional help to have the best chance at full recovery. Your child's GP and other members of the primary care team, like your practice nurse, will play an important part in this first step of identifying your son or daughter's eating disorder.

Your GP will look at their weight for their age and might monitor significant weight changes. They are likely to ask about concerns your child has about weight or body shape and talk about eating disorder behaviours. They may also take some blood for testing. Encourage your child to be open with the doctor about how they are feeling, even if this is difficult for them. If your GP thinks your child might have an eating disorder they will refer them for an assessment and possible treatment by a person with specialist eating disorder knowledge. This should happen as quickly as possible.

Treatment for anorexia

Psychological treatments that your child might be referred to once diagnosed with anorexia:

- Cognitive analytic therapy (CAT)
- Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT)
- Interpersonal therapy (IPT),
- Focal psychodynamic therapy
- Family therapy

Sometimes, there may be access to a specialist to give advice about diet and food but this shouldn't be the only treatment they're offered.

Aspects of their physical health will be monitored at the same time. Inpatient treatment is offered to patients of anorexia if their physical health is very poor or the medical team think that they might be at risk of harming themselves in some way.

Some anorexia sufferers are also prescribed **medication** for anorexia as a part of their treatment plan.

Treatment for bulimia

Self-help may be recommended by the GP as a first step on the road to recovery. This might mean being recommended books or other guides.

Psychological treatments that your child might be referred to:

- Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Interpersonal therapy (IPT)

Medication can be offered alongside a programme of self-help or talking therapies. They can help to reduce frequency of binges and purges.

In the majority of cases, treatment for bulimia will be as an outpatient. But if physical health is of concern or your child is at risk of hurting themselves, inpatient treatment may be suggested.

Treatment for binge eating disorder

Self-help is often the first suggestion for the treatment of binge eating disorder. Your GP may recommend books or self-help courses. Following self-help, and if your binge eating disorder is persistent, **psychological treatment** might be recommended:

- Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT)
- Modified dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT)

Medication is also sometimes recommended as either an alternative or accompaniment to self-help or talking therapies. Similar drugs used to treat depression might be suggested by your doctor; this can help to reduce the behavioural patterns associated with binge eating disorder.

It is unusual for someone with binge eating disorder to be admitted as an inpatient but they may be asked to attend day services which advise about planning meals and further understanding diet and nutrition.

Resources

Beat

Beat are the UK's leading charity supporting anyone affected by eating disorders or difficulties with food, weight and shape. They provide a range of services and resources that can help and support you and your child:

- Have a look at their [Message Boards \(link is external\)](#).
- Access support groups either [in your local area \(link is external\)](#) or [online \(link is external\)](#).
- Contact their [Helpline Services \(link is external\)](#) .
- Use [HelpFinder \(link is external\)](#), Beat's online directory to search for services near you.

Anorexia Bulimia Care

<http://www.anorexiabulimiare.org.uk/> (link is external).

Dr. Pooky Knightsmith's free resources for schools and professionals

<http://www.inourhands.com/free-resources>