

“ Anorexia makes you see things differently and, although you might not want to take the advice, it will really help and you will be grateful in the future, trust me. I am much happier now than I was when I had anorexia and have much more time for things I care about, rather than worrying about food. ”

“ People need to start understanding more about anorexia and mental health problems. Just because someone doesn't look physically unwell, doesn't always mean they are okay. ”

“ I have also had friends with eating disorders. It can be hard to watch your friends suffer with an eating disorder and not know what to do, but there are lots of ways that you can help. Although you might not feel like they want your advice, it will really help them. ”



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USEFUL CONTACTS

Beat

The UK's eating disorder charity.

Helpline:

England: 0808 801 0677

Scotland: 0808 801 0432

Wales: 0808 801 0433

Northern Ireland: 0808 801 0434

(Weekdays, 9am – midnight;

Weekends and bank holidays, 4pm – midnight)

Website: www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk

SEED

Eating disorder support service.

Advice line: 01482 718130 (Mon – Fri, 9.30am – 2.30pm)

Website: www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk

Eating Disorders Support

Support service for anyone affected by eating disorders, including carers.

Helpline: 01494 793223 (24/7)

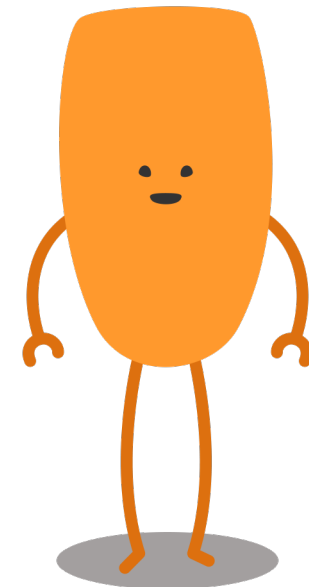
Website: www.eatingdisorderssupport.co.uk

stem4
51 St George's Road
Wimbledon, London SW19 4EA

e: info@stem4.org.uk
[@stem4org](https://www.instagram.com/stem4org)
stem4.org.uk

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supporting teenage mental health
Registered Charity No. 1144506

EATING DISORDERS



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EATING DISORDERS

Key facts:

Eating disorders are characterised by an abnormal attitude to food and body weight/shape, leading a person to alter their eating patterns and behaviours, and ultimately causing damage to their physical and mental health.

There are three main types of eating disorders:

- **Anorexia nervosa** – a person who perceives their body abnormally and, as a result, tries to keep their weight as low as possible.
- **Bulimia nervosa** – a person who goes through periods of binge eating followed by trying to get rid of what they have eaten.
- **Binge eating disorder** – a person who compulsively eats large quantities of food.

All eating disorders harm physical and mental health and are very dangerous mental illness conditions. Early and effective treatment is essential.

How do I know if I have an eating disorder?

- Has the quantity or type of food you eat changed significantly?
- Have you noticed changes and/or fluctuations in your body weight?
- Do you have a distorted perception of your body so what you think is out of sync with what others think?

- Do you feel bad after you have eaten and wish you hadn't?
- Do you do things to get rid of food that you have eaten?
- Are you uncomfortable eating around others?
- Have your eating habits altered in response to an upsetting or unsettling situation or incident?

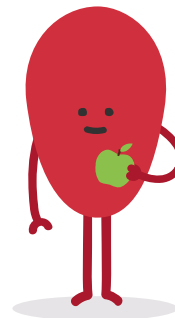
If you answered 'yes' to most of these questions, we recommend you see a GP or mental health professional for their accurate assessment and diagnosis.



Why deal with an eating disorder?

Eating disorders have a very negative effect on both your physical and mental health and, in time, will affect all parts of your body. They make it hard for you to achieve your true potential as they affect the workings of your brain in a negative way, including by lowering mood and concentration.

Eating disorders can also make you isolated and, in the end, lonely; as eating disorders make it hard to eat with others, socialising becomes problematic. Eating disorders will ultimately end up making you feel miserable.



What can I try to do?

- Take on board other people's concerns and accept that there is a problem.
- Encourage yourself to eat regularly, however hard it may be. Take small and consistent steps to get better.
- Make a decision to reduce harmful behaviours associated with binge-eating, one step at a time.
- Talk to a trusted adult.
- Visit your GP by phoning your local practice and booking an appointment (check if you can book it with their mental health lead). Go ready to discuss your concerns and the problems you are experiencing. Make sure you mention any physical symptoms you have noticed. Write down things that are hard to say. If you have a lot to discuss, book a double appointment.
- Ask your GP to check your health e.g., your blood pressure or blood iron levels.
- Keep a diary to note triggers, negative thoughts, and eating patterns.
- Get help as early as possible. You can ask your GP about what treatment is available and what it involves.
- Check recommendations of the NHS website and read any self-help material that your GP gives you.
- Be open-minded and prepared to change.

Asking for help

stem4 has an Asking for help booklet available on our Resources page www.stem4.org.uk/resources



Watch out for a new app towards the end of 2022.