

# Your guide to Eating Disorders



**anorexia**



# What is Anorexia?

**Anorexia Nervosa** is an **Eating Disorder**. Eating Disorders are mental conditions where there is a disturbance in the way a person deals with **body image, food and weight**.

A person that suffers from Anorexia **restricts** their intake of food to **lose weight**. Restricting your food intake is very dangerous, and can lead to a number of emotional and physical **health issues** (see the 'Signs, Effects & Treatment' section). This is known as "**Restrictive type**"

Another type of Anorexia is where the sufferer goes for **long periods** of time without eating. When they do start to eat again they often **binge** and **purge** in a cycle. This is known as "**Binge Eating Type**"

**Did you know?**  
60% of 14 - 15 Year old girls consider themselves "**Overweight**"  
- Schools Health Education Unit

As time goes on, sufferers start to **obsess** about food more and more, and it slowly becomes an **obsession** that takes over their lives. Sufferers can think about food and weight **constantly** and will often inform others about **nutritional information** of foods.

It is also common for those with Anorexia to **exercise** unhealthily and be very **secretive** about their behaviours even to friends and family.

It is **important** that an Anorexia sufferer gets **help** and **support** from a **professional service**, as currently 20% of those with Anorexia **die** each year.

**Did you know?**  
**Anorexia Nervosa** means "Loss of Appetite of the Mind"

# Signs, Effects & Treatment

So how do you know that somebody is **suffering** from Anorexia? The simple answer is that **you can't**. There are lots of **signs**, however that somebody is undergoing the battle:

Signs of Anorexia	Effects of Anorexia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Change in character</li><li>• Depression</li><li>• Unwilling to eat with others</li><li>• Anti-social</li><li>• Withdrawn</li><li>• Distorted Body Image</li><li>• Low self esteem</li><li>• Low self worth</li><li>• Mood swings</li><li>• Prone to uncharacteristic outbursts</li><li>• The need to be in control</li><li>• Obsession about food and food issues</li><li>• The need to feed and nurture other</li><li>• Impaired concentration</li><li>• Irrational thought patterns</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significant, Serious weight loss</li><li>• 3 consecutive periods are missed</li><li>• Loss of libido (sex drive)</li><li>• Fatigues</li><li>• Dizzy</li><li>• Feeling Cold / Chilblains</li><li>• Blotchy, Dry skin</li><li>• Dry, brittle hair</li><li>• Fine layer of body hair to keep warm</li><li>• Wears several layers of clothing</li><li>• Wears baggy clothing</li><li>• Osteoporosis (Brittle bones)</li><li>• Organs become compromised</li><li>• 20% death rate</li></ul>

It is important to know that whilst **most** people with Anorexia do get some of these signs and effects, it is possible not to **experience** any. If you **think** that your friend or somebody close to you might be **experiencing** an Eating Disorder it is important to **get help**. See our 'Resources' page.

Anorexia **can** be treated. It is most **effective** if the problem is identified **early** on.

Treatment involves establishing a **healthy attitude** towards food, and a constant eating pattern. Whilst a **lot** of sufferers can be **fully cured**, others have the problem reduced so that they can **live** with it. The sufferer **must** also be ready to get help and support from **services**.

**Did you know?**

85% of Eating Disorder sufferers find their GP is unhelpful.

- Beat (2007)

bulimia

Who's  
in  
control  
now?



# What is Bulimia?

**Bulimia Nervosa** is an **Eating Disorder**. Eating Disorders are mental conditions where there is a disturbance in the way a person deals with **body image, food and weight**.

A person that suffers from Bulimia is caught in a **binge / purge** cycle. This means that they **often** eat a **considerably large** amount of food and then **expel** it by vomiting, laxative abuse, diuretic abuse and **excessive** exercise.

Like **Anorexia**, Bulimia sufferers spend **most** of their time obsessing about food, **double** the amount of Anorexia Sufferers. Also similar to Anorexia, Bulimia sufferers use it as a **coping strategy** for something they feel they have no **control** over in life.

It is not **uncommon** for sufferers of Bulimia to vomit upwards of **50** times per day, and take around **90** laxatives. This is **one** reason why Bulimia sufferers find that they have a **loss of control** over their eating, and find it difficult to **maintain** relationships and other social interactions.

Bulimia is so **similar** to Anorexia in fact, that it is **common** for Bulimia to be born out of **Anorexia** and Anorexia to be born out of **Bulimia**. It is **important** that a Bulimia sufferer gets **help** and **support** from a **psychological service**, as untreated Bulimia can lead to **death**.

**Did you know?**

**Bulimia Nervosa** means "Appetite of an Ox of the Mind"

**Did you know?**

10% of adolescent girls use laxative abuse, excessive exercise and diuretic abuse to **control** weight

- Beat

# Signs, Effects & Treatment

So how do you know that somebody is **suffering** from Bulimia? The simple answer is that **you can't**. There are lots of **signs**, however that somebody is undergoing the **battle**:

## Signs of Bulimia

- Change in character
- Depression
- Unwilling to eat with others
- Anti-social
- Withdrawn
- Distorted Body Image
- Low self esteem
- Low self worth
- Mood swings
- Prone to uncharacteristic outbursts
- The need to be in control
- Obsession about food and food issues
- The need to feed and nurture other
- Impaired concentration
- Irrational thought patterns
- Guilt and Self Loathe
- Anxiety and Tension

## Effects of Bulimia

- May be underweight
- Eat huge amounts of food at once
- May disappear to the toilet during or after a meal
- May have calluses on knuckles
- Poor skin condition
- Poor hair condition
- Swollen glands resulting in 'moon' face
- Teeth Erosion
- Throat Infections
- Ruptured Oesophagus
- Bowel Problems
- Muscle Weakness
- Feeling Bloating
- Tiredness
- Electrolyte Imbalance
- Alcohol abuse
- Drug abuse

It is important to know that whilst **most** people with Bulimia do get some of these signs and effects, it is possible not to **experience** any. If you **think** that somebody you know might be **experiencing** an Eating Disorder it is important to **get help**. See our 'Resources' page.

Bulimia **can** be treated. It is most **effective** if the problem is identified **early** on. Whilst a **lot** of sufferers can be **fully cured**, others have the problem reduced so that they can **live** with it. The sufferer **must** also be ready to get help and support from **services**.

### Did you know?

92% of young people with an Eating Disorder stay **silent**.

- Beat

# All about EDNOS

**EDNOS** is an **Eating Disorder**. It stands for **Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified**. Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified is a **diagnosis** that is given to a person who doesn't fit all of the criteria for **Anorexia** or **Bulimia**.

Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified still has the same **causes** as other Eating Disorders, being the fact that it is a combination of **disordered eating** and **compensating behaviour**. It is also caused by deep emotional turmoil and with low self esteem.

It is also common for people with an Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified diagnosis to **frequently** change eating patterns, or over time a sufferer may begin to fit the **diagnostic criteria** for another Eating Disorder (Anorexia or Bulimia).

**Did you know?**  
In 2006, the NHS treated **58** children under the age of 10 for Eating Disorders. Over **half** of these were boys.  
- Beat

Whilst Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified can range from being not very serious to **life threatening**, it is still as **important** as Anorexia or Bulimia, and if you think that somebody close to you may be suffering from this condition, it is important for them to **get help**. Whilst Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified is a diagnosis, the symptoms and effects of the disorder can be any from that of Anorexia or Bulimia. It is thought that 6% of the world fit this disorders criteria.

**Did you know?**  
50% of those who go to the doctor about Eating issues get diagnosed with **EDNOS**

# Supporting a sufferer

Most of the time somebody with an eating disorder will need **professional help**. Families, friends and carers however, can provide priceless help and **support** to somebody that suffers from an eating disorder.

Caring for somebody with an eating disorder as a friend or family member can be **difficult** at times. It is normal for the sufferer to get **depressed, angry** and fed up. This isn't because they are changing though, it is because the eating disorder is starting to **take over** them.

It is also normal to feel **embarrassed** about their eating disorder, or feeling **guilty** that it is your fault. At times like this, you always have to **think positive**. Focus on trying to get the sufferer professional help, or helping them to **recover**.

When the treatment and recovery begins, it can take **some time** before the effects start to show. You can help to support somebody through this process by **listening** to them and helping to **stop** their disorder from getting any worse.

Another important thing to know is that to **recover** from an Eating Disorder, you need to take it **one step** at a time. During this process it is **common** for the sufferer to have a **relapse**, or take one step forwards and two steps back as the saying goes.

The final point is that an eating disorder is **hardly** related to food. The disorder is all about how they think and feel. This is why it is **important** to **listen** without making any **judgements** or getting **angry**.

# Anna's Story

This is the story of Anna. A teenage anorexia sufferer.

Living with an eating disorder is extremely hard. I'm fed up of this pain, the hospitals, the lying, the constant worrying, the sickness, and the tears. In the past year, I've lost so much that was dear to me. It all first started when I was about thirteen and started gaining weight. Gaining weight so quickly mad me feel really awfully fat and horrible.

All that seemed to matter was being thin. I started gradually cutting out meals where I could get away with it, so I wouldnt eat lunch at school and then I stopped eating breakfast and tea. I got my first boyfriend and I thought this was a result of starving myself but I was really dizzy and I fainted a lot.

I started getting help for my problem last year when my friend went to Connexions about me saying I needed someone to help me. I started seeing connexions every week and I eventually told her the problem, she then put me in contact with an eating disorder specialist who I now see once or twice a week. The specialist asked me to tell my boyfriend and my best friend not to let me out of their sight after I'd eaten so I couldn't purge.

The most important part was that I chose to get help. I've had these thoughts since I was very young, but there must have been something to set me off. I just don't know it yet. I really struggled with getting better but seeeing how happy my friends and my boyfriend are when they see me eating made it easier. I do think though, that having this illness has changed me for the better. Yes I've lost friends and relationships have been ruined as I've pushed everyone away. But I've gained better friendships, stronger than many people will ever make.

# Resources and Support

## TeenHelp



**Link:**  
[teenhelp.org](http://teenhelp.org)

TeenHelp is an anonymous young persons support service that is run by young people. It operates a Live Help service, Chat Room, support forums, videos, articles and more.

## beat



**Link:**  
[b-eat.co.uk](http://b-eat.co.uk)  
0845 634 1414

Originally the Eating Disorders Association, beat is a leading UK charity for sufferers of Eating Disorders and their families. It has a youth helpline and a variety of resources

## SEED



**Link:**  
[seedeatingdisorders.co.uk](http://seedeatingdisorders.co.uk)  
01482 718130

SEED is an Eating Disorders organization within Hull and the East Riding. It is a support service for any adult or young person in their fight against Anorexia, Bulimia or EDNOS

## Connexions Direct



**Link:**  
[connexions-direct.com](http://connexions-direct.com)  
08 0800 13 2 19

Connexions-Direct is a website that allows young people to speak to an online advisor, or get help on a variety of issues including Eating Disorders and their effects / treatment

## ChildLine



**Link:**  
[childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)  
0800 1111

ChildLine is a support service for children and young people across the United Kingdom. You can get support and advice via the phone, email, message boards or live chat service

## Mind Matters



**Link:**  
[erya.co.uk](http://erya.co.uk)

The Mind Matter support site is a sign posting service to point young people in the right direction to get help with a variety of Mental Health issues including Eating Disorders

This document has been produced by the East Riding Youth Assembly's Mental Health sub group as part of the 'Mind Matters' campaign.

## **Your guide to Eating Disorders**

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