

ANOREXIA IN ADOLESCENTS

What is Anorexia Nervosa ?

Anorexia is characterized by weight loss, body image distortion and difficulty maintaining a proper body weight for age, height and stature.

Warning Signs

- Preoccupation with food, calories and dieting
- Refusing to eat certain foods or entire food groups
- Skipping meals or eating small portion sizes
- Frequent dieting
- Concerns about body size and weight
- Sleep problems
- Digestion problems
- Frequently cold
- Brittle hair and nails
- Is unable to or resists maintaining a normal body weight

Treatment

Getting a diagnosis from a medical doctor is the first and most important step in recovery! Each person's recovery will look different. Below are a few common treatment options:

- Work with a team of medical, mental health and nutrition professionals. This will include medical Doctors, a Licensed Mental Health specialists and a Registered Dietitian.
- There are many different therapy options including cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) , acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), family-based treatment (FBT) and interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT)
- There are different levels of care including intensive outpatient, partial hospitalization, residential and inpatient. The treatment team will help determine which option is the best.

If you are concerned your child might be struggling with anorexia it is important to talk to them about it.

Here's what you can do to help

- Talk to them about it from a nonjudgemental place
- At mealtimes avoid conversation around diets, calorie counts and body image
- Support your child by asking what you can do to help, remind them that you love him/her, be a good role model when it comes to eating by eating a variety of foods and showing him/her that all foods are part of a healthy diet
- Get support for yourself such as joining a parent's support group.

Additional Resources

<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/help-support>

<https://anad.org>

<https://www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com/eating-disorder-support-groups-and-programs/>

Reference: Anorexia nervosa. National Eating Disorders Association.

<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/learn/by-eating-disorder/anorexia>. Published February 28, 2018. Accessed April 1, 2023.