

What else can you do to help yourself?

Buy and read a self help book (research shows that some people recover simply by following the advice contained in the book).

For **Bulimia Nervosa and Atypical Eating Disorders**:

- "Overcoming Binge Eating" by Christopher Fairburn. The Guilford Press.
- "Getting Better Bit(e) By Bit(e)" by Ulrike Schmidt and Janet Treasure. Psychology Press.

For **Anorexia Nervosa**:

- "Anorexia Nervosa - The Wish To Change" by Arthur Crisp and colleagues. Psychology Press.
- "Anorexia Nervosa - A Survival Guide for Families, Friends and Sufferers" by Janet Treasure. Psychology Press.

For parents of adolescents:

- Eating Disorders: A parents guide by Rachel Bryant-Waugh and Bryan Lask. Penguin.

All these books are available from EDA.

Contact the **Eating Disorders Association (EDA)**.

EDA: 01603-621414

1st Floor, Wensum House,
103 Prince of Wales Road,
Norwich, NR1 1DW

EDA Youth helpline 01603 765050

4pm - 6pm Monday - Friday.

For young people aged 18 and under.

What help is available in Gloucestershire?

Efforts are currently being made to improve the services available from the NHS. People with an eating disorder and their families will be able to get some or all of the following help when required, depending on the severity of the illness:

- Information and advice from a telephone help line.
- Attendance at an education group
- Initial assessment and help from their GP.
- Support to use a self help book.
- Help from their local Mental Health Service, including assessment of the problem by a professional who has a special interest in eating disorders.
- Day care or treatment in hospital for people with very severe difficulties.

The EDA support group meets on the first Wednesday of each month, 7.30 - 8.45 pm at St. Peter's Lounge, St. Peter's Court, St. Peter's Road, Cirencester. Contact Pat Ayres Tel: 01285 770385.

For further information on eating disorders or services available in Gloucestershire, contact:

The Eating Disorders Project

01452 891206

Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm

www.edglos.org.uk

Eating Disorders



Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa and atypical eating disorders affect up to 6% of young women.

Men, children and older women can also have an eating disorder.

People with an eating disorder become over concerned with body shape and weight, but have underlying problems of very low self esteem and difficulties relating with people.

They rarely see themselves as ill and try to avoid discovery of their secret behaviour.

Weight loss is seen as the only way to feel better and "in control" of life, so people with an eating disorder generally don't seek help.

Eating Disorders cause physical, psychological and social suffering, and can also have a damaging effect on the lives of carers, who are often the first to identify the problem.

Eating disorders usually last several years and don't tend to go away without help.

This leaflet offers guidance on how to get help for an eating disorder in Gloucestershire



Gloucestershire Partnership 
NHS Trust

What is an eating disorder?

The person with **Anorexia Nervosa (AN)** diets (and often exercises excessively), reducing their body weight to at least 15% below their average expected weight.

- A resulting hormonal disorder leads to loss of menstrual periods in women.
- The person with AN has an intense fear of becoming fat, which is sometimes denied.
- They feel fat even though under-weight, and have very low self esteem, which is unduly influenced by body shape or weight.
- They might also binge eat, vomit or misuse laxatives.

The person with **Bulimia Nervosa (BN)** experiences episodes of binge eating (a large amount of food in a short space of time), during which they cannot control how much they eat.

- To prevent weight gain, they self induce vomiting, misuse laxatives, fast, or excessively exercise.
- They have low self esteem which is unduly influenced by body shape or weight.

The person with an **Atypical Eating Disorder** often appears very similar to someone with AN or BN, but could:

- self induce vomiting after eating small amounts of food,
- repeatedly chew and spit out food,
- or binge eat, but not prevent weight gain (binge eating disorder).

What are the effects of an eating disorder?

The physical consequences can affect almost every part of the body, and are potentially fatal if there is severe weight loss, vomiting or laxative abuse.

The psychological consequences often include depression, anxiety, obsessional behaviour, drug abuse or self harm.

Social effects can include erratic behaviour, social withdrawal, debt, shoplifting and damage to relationships (including feeding and growth problems in the children of mothers with an eating disorder).

What can you do if you think that you have an eating disorder?

- Ask yourself how much your life is affected by worries about body weight and shape.
- Do the descriptions of eating disorders on this leaflet match your experience?
- Make a list of all the things that worry you.
- Discuss your worries with someone you trust. A counsellor, school nurse or teacher, could help you to consider whether you need further help.
- Talk to your **General Practitioner (GP)**, so that she or he can assess the situation with you and discuss appropriate help. Your GP can refer you to other NHS staff if needed.
- Share your list of worries with your GP and try to be honest about the methods that you use to avoid weight gain.

Why does someone get an eating disorder?

An eating disorder can be caused and maintained by many different factors, but it usually starts with dieting.

People who have low self esteem, and tend to be perfectionist, are particularly vulnerable.

What can you do if you are worried that someone you know might have an eating disorder?

- Make a list of your worries. Focus especially on actual behaviour that you or other people have observed.
- Make time to discuss your concerns privately with the person you are worried about. Remember that they might feel very embarrassed by the conversation, so take things gently and don't argue with them.
- Encourage them to express their worries and try to explain your feelings without blaming them for how you feel.
- Show them this leaflet. If they admit that there is a problem, discuss whether they could talk to their GP or someone else.
- If they deny that there is a problem and you remain worried, try again another time.
- If you are extremely concerned about their physical health, let their GP know your concerns.
- If the person you are concerned about is your child (aged below 18), talk to their GP or School Nurse soon. Help in the early stages of an eating disorder is far more likely to be effective.