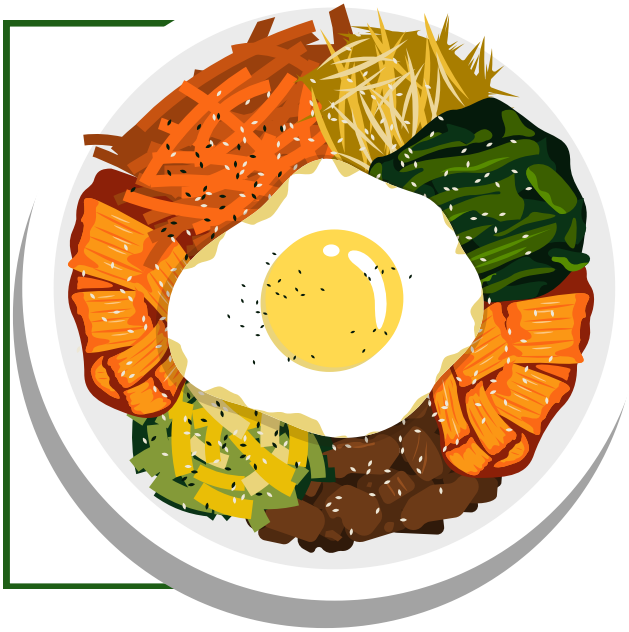
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders are complex mental health conditions that involve unhealthy eating habits, going beyond normal concerns about food and weight. They often stem from a combination of genetic, biological, behavioural, psychological, and social factors, and can significantly impact physical health, emotional well-being, and everyday functioning. While there are several types of eating disorders, the three most common ones are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder. Recognising the signs and seeking appropriate help for disordered eating is crucial in ensuring a good recovery.

Early intervention and seeking professional help is crucial to improve recovery outcomes.



1 Anorexia Nervosa

Definition and Signs: Extreme fear of gaining weight, severe food restriction, and distorted body image. Significant weight loss, obsession with/avoidance of food/meals.

Impact and Treatment: Heart problems, osteoporosis, severe malnutrition. Requires medical care, nutritional counselling, and psychotherapy.

2 Bulimia Nervosa

Definition and Signs: Episodes of binge eating followed by compensatory purging behaviours to prevent weight gain, such as vomiting, excessive exercise, or misuse of laxatives.

Impact and Treatment: Weight fluctuation, severe dental problems, gastrointestinal issues, and electrolyte imbalances. Requires psychotherapy, medication, nutritional counselling.

3 Binge-Eating Disorder

Definition and Signs: Recurrent episodes of eating large quantities of food often secretly and quickly to the point of discomfort, without subsequent purging.

Impact and Treatment: Obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease. Requires psychotherapy, dietary counselling, medication to manage symptoms of depression.

Other Eating Disorders

- Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID): only eating very specific foods.
- Orthorexia: obsession with eating "pure" food.
- Pica: eating non-food substances (e.g. sponges, chalk).
- Rumination Disorder: repetitive, habitual bringing up of food that might be partly digested.

Help Available

- NHS treatment, including your GP or potentially hospitalisation.
- BEAT Helpline, or Mind.
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Talking therapy
- Medication such as anti-depressants/psychotics
- Self care including avoiding triggers

For more information, make sure you contact your GP or visit the NHS website