

# THE INSIDE SCOOP

How to support a child experiencing eating difficulties

## Useful Apps:



SAM



FearTools



What's Up?



Fabulous - Daily Routine Planner



Stop, Breathe & Think Kids

Unless stated otherwise, apps are not supplied by the NHS and the NHS is not liable for their use.

# THE INSIDE SCOOP

How to support a child experiencing eating difficulties

## WHEN TO BE CONCERNED?

The degree to which a young person experiences eating difficulties may cause the young person distress or might have some mild impact on their ability to cope with everyday life such as going to or coping at school, seeing friends or taking part in leisure activities. The family may also be experiencing more arguments or disagreements around food/mealtimes, exercise levels/known or suspected vomiting. Other people may be commenting or noticing there is a difficulty or noticing change in weight. These difficulties may have been going on for a few weeks.

## WHAT TO DO:

- It is important that all young people eat regularly so insisting upon breakfast, lunch and dinner plus snacks especially if the young person is exercising
- Encourage a balanced lifestyle; we need all food groups (carbohydrates, protein, fats, vegetables and fruits, dairy/dairy alternatives) plus it's OK to have snacks and treats
- Ensure young people are well hydrated; aim for 6-8 glasses per day (water, milk) and avoid large quantities of sugary drinks
- If you are concerned about your child's eating, see your GP
- Inform your child's school to share concerns
- Monitor and restrict use of apps/gadgets that track exercise and food e.g. My Fitness Pal and Fitbit watches
- Watch our parent/carer workshop on how to support a young person with an eating difficulty here: [youtu.be/-ApfAzKOy60](https://youtu.be/-ApfAzKOy60)
- There is a lot of information on the Sussex CAMHS website: [sussexcamhs.nhs.uk/help-support/young-people/eating-difficulties-yp/](https://sussexcamhs.nhs.uk/help-support/young-people/eating-difficulties-yp/)

Seek advice and consultation from our Pan-Sussex Children and Young People Family Eating Disorder Service: 01444 472670 or email: [spnt.feds@nhs.net](mailto:spnt.feds@nhs.net)

## WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE?

A committed and persistent effort to lose weight or control weight or shape through dieting/restricting food intake, exercising or purging **OR**

- Eating excessive amounts/binging and gaining weight
- Experiencing distress after eating
- Dissatisfaction about body image
- More argumentative (especially around food or mealtimes)
- More controlling or rigid around food/mealtimes
- Preoccupied by food (e.g. counting calories)
- Signs of physical compromise e.g. gradual weight loss, tired/lethargic, difficulties concentrating, feeling cold, lack of menstruation in girls
- Other areas of life might be a struggle e.g. academic work, friendships, engaging in family life
- Young people with Type 1 diabetes may become more inconsistent with insulin and diabetes less well managed (this should be checked with a medical team as a matter of priority)

## Emergency symptoms - seek immediate medical advice:

- Sudden or rapid weight loss
- Fainting/collapse
- Drowsiness
- Refusing food or drink for more than 24 hours
- Chest pains
- Concerns about daily vomiting

#Recipes4wellbeing



[sussexcamhs.nhs.uk](https://sussexcamhs.nhs.uk)