

Anorexia Nervosa

Information for young people and their
families or carers.



What is anorexia nervosa?

Anorexia (short for anorexia nervosa) is a type of eating disorder. Anorexia is a **serious mental health problem**. Anorexia is not a lifestyle choice. It's when someone uses food and drink to try and cope with difficult feelings.

If you have anorexia, you might be very afraid of gaining weight. Even if you're very thin or not eating enough, you might still feel like you're overweight. This happens because of the way you see your body - this is called having a distorted body image.

Signs of anorexia

Some common signs of anorexia are:

- Skipping meals or eating very little
- Thinking a lot about food but avoiding eating things you think will make you gain weight
- Believing you're overweight, even if you're not
- Exercising too much in an unhealthy way
- Weighing less than what's healthy for your age and height
- Missing periods (for girls)
- Taking pills to stop feeling hungry
- Taking pills to make yourself go to the toilet

If you or someone you know shows these signs, it's important to talk to a trusted adult or health professional. Getting help early can really make a difference.

What causes anorexia?

Anorexia doesn't usually have a clear cause. It can develop because of a mix of things, like someone's genes, their personality, and how their body works. It can also be triggered by what's going on in their life or the people and situations around them. Please visit <http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/eating-problems/causes-of-eating-problems/> to learn more about the causes of eating difficulties.

How to get help

It's important people with anorexia to get help early, because the condition can affect how they feel, think, and how their body works over time. If you're worried about yourself, a friend, or someone in your family, you can talk to a school nurse, your GP, or another trusted adult. They can help you get the right support, and a professional might refer you to CAMHS [Eating Disorders Team](#). This is a service that helps children young people with their mental health.

Please visit www.healthforteens.co.uk/leicestercity/camhs-eating-disorders-team-edt/ for more information about the CAMHS Eating Disorders Team.

Please visit www.healthforteens.co.uk/feelings/eating-disorders/anorexia-nervosa-just-the-facts/ to learn more about anorexia.

Need help now?

If you need urgent mental health support, 24/7 support is available over the phone. Call [NHS 111](https://111.nhs.uk/), selecting mental health crisis option 2. This number is open 24 hours a day and is totally free and confidential. You can also text 0748 063 5199.

If there is an immediate threat to life, dial 999.

If you are deaf and have urgent mental health needs, you can use the NHS 111 British Sign Language service:

www.signvideo.co.uk/nhs111

<https://111.nhs.uk/>

If you are accessing these links electronically you can use our accessibility toolbar, which is especially useful if you have a hidden disability such as dyslexia (or other reading difficulties), a visual impairment or English as a second language. If you would like to access this leaflet digitally, please speak to a member of our staff.

If you need help to understand this leaflet or would like it in a different language or format such as large print, Braille, or audio, please speak to a member of our staff.

We warmly welcome any comments and suggestions you may have. To share your feedback, speak with a member of our team, fill out our Friends and Family Test or reach out to our patient advice and liaison service (PALS). For more information about PALS, please visit www.leicspart.nhs.uk/contact/patient-advice-and-liaison-service-pals/.

Our PALS and complaints team is here to help you with any compliments, questions, comments, or concerns you may have relating to our services. They can also:

- provide confidential advice and support to patients and service users, their families and carers
- listen and respond to any compliments, comments or suggestions and provide information about services and local support groups
- help to resolve concerns on your behalf
- give you information on how you can get involved in helping us to develop our service.

To speak with PALS, contact them by:

- calling 0116 295 0830 (Monday to Friday 9.00am – 4:30pm). You can leave a voicemail message at any time, and they will call you back.
- emailing: lpt.pals@nhs.net

Why not follow our social media account?

Search for **'healthforteens_leicester'** on Instagram to stay up to date with our latest content.

Here are some useful resources for young people and their families or carers:

	<p>Information discussed during appointments will be kept confidential (this means we will keep your information within certain limits). Please scan the QR code or visit www.leicspart.nhs.uk/privacy-policy/ to learn more about our Trust's privacy policy.</p>
	<p>www.leicspart.nhs.uk/mental-health/</p>
	<p>www.nhs.uk</p>
	<p>www.healthforteens.co.uk</p>

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