



Understanding eating disorders and seeking help: a guide

Eating disorders are serious mental health illnesses that affect people of all ages and genders. They are not a choice, and they can have devastating physical and emotional consequences. If you or someone you know is struggling with an eating disorder, it is essential to seek help. Remember, recovery is possible, and you are not alone.



What are eating disorders?

Eating disorders are mental health conditions that involve unhealthy relationships with food, weight, and body image. The three most common types are:

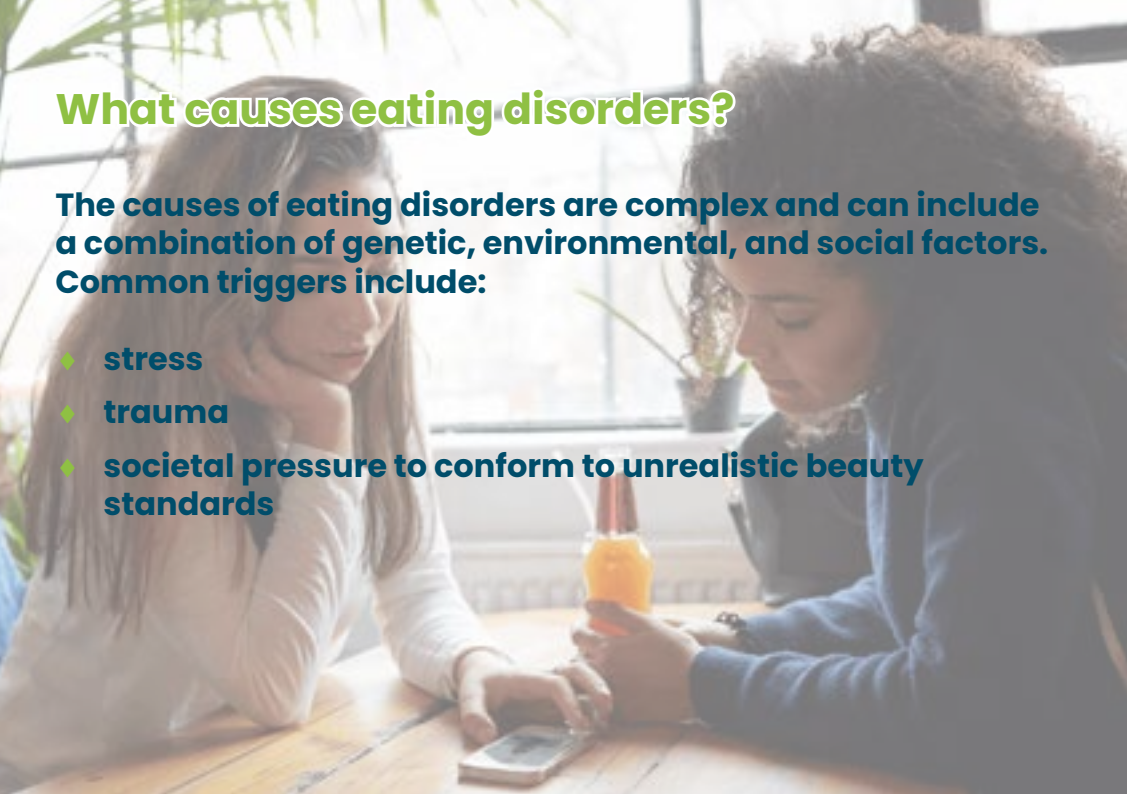
- ◆ anorexia nervosa
- ◆ bulimia nervosa
- ◆ binge eating disorder



What causes eating disorders?

The causes of eating disorders are complex and can include a combination of genetic, environmental, and social factors. Common triggers include:

- stress
- trauma
- societal pressure to conform to unrealistic beauty standards



What are the warning signs of eating disorders?

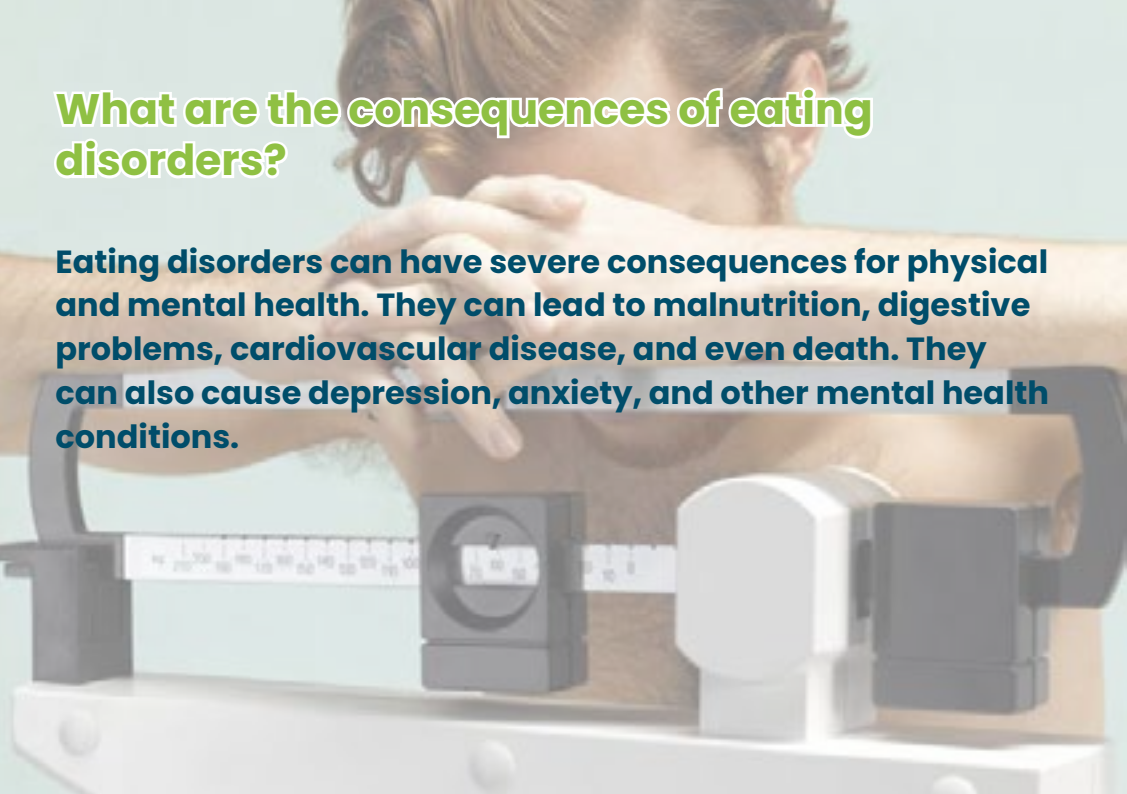
The warning signs of eating disorders can vary depending on the type of disorder, but some common signs include:

- ◆ significant weight loss or gain
- ◆ restrictive or binge eating
- ◆ preoccupation with food and body image
- ◆ changes in mood and behaviour



What are the consequences of eating disorders?

Eating disorders can have severe consequences for physical and mental health. They can lead to malnutrition, digestive problems, cardiovascular disease, and even death. They can also cause depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions.



Getting help with eating disorders

If you or someone you know is struggling with an eating disorder, it is essential to seek professional help. Treatment can include therapy, nutritional counselling, and medical monitoring.

Some tips for seeking help include:

- ◆ **Talk to someone you trust, such as a friend, family member, or healthcare provider**
- ◆ **Find a support group or helpline for eating disorders**
- ◆ **Seek specialised treatment from a qualified mental health professional or healthcare providers**
- ◆ **Practice self-care and self-compassion, and remember that recovery is possible**

Where to get help

- ◆ East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) 01582 293333
<https://www.elft.nhs.uk/service/302/Community-Eating-Disorder-Service-Bedfordshire-and-Luton>
- ◆ Bedfordshire And Luton Camh Eating Disorders Service 01234 893308
<https://www.nhs.uk/services/service-directory/bedfordshire-and-luton-camh-eating-disorders-service/N1087471>
- ◆ Beat eating disorders 0808 801 0677
<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>
- ◆ CARALINE Eating Disorders Counselling & Support Service 01582 457474
<https://caraline.com/>
- ◆ Mind Infoline 0300 123 3393
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/>
- ◆ Overeaters Anonymous 07000 784 985
<https://www.oagb.org.uk/>



Listen to Young Healthwatch's podcast on eating disorders:

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