



# Eating Disorder Guide

## For Caregivers

### What are Eating Disorders?

Eating disorders are illnesses that can affect an individual’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviours surrounding food and/or their body.

#### Anorexia Nervosa

(AN)

- Food restriction
- Over-exercising
- Preoccupation with body weight and appearance

#### Bulimia Nervosa

(BN)

- Periods of binge eating and purging
- Preoccupation with body weight and appearance

#### Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder

(ARFID)

- Persistent inability to meet nutritional and/or energy needs
- Not focused on body image or weight

*\*These are three common types of eating disorders, but other eating disorders exist.*

### Family-Based Treatment (FBT)

#### What is it?

- AN
- Single family therapy guided by a healthcare provider
  - You would be placed in charge of the re-feeding process, as you know your child the best
  - Control over eating is eventually transferred back to your child
  - Outpatient treatment
- BN

#### What do the guidelines say?

- Strongly recommended
- Most effective for those with less than three years of illness
- Leads to greater weight restoration, higher remission rates, and reduces guilt and anxiety that your child might experience related to decisions about food

### Enhanced Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT-E)

BN

#### What is it?

- Individual therapy between your child and their therapist to address repetitive thoughts related to food and body image
- Available in individual and group-based formats

#### What do the guidelines say?

- Weak recommendation (due to limited research)
- Benefits could include: Weight restoration, improvement in symptoms

### Multi-Family Therapy (MFT)

AN

#### What is it?

- Workshops delivered to multiple families at once
- Consider whether your child is comfortable in a group setting

#### What do the guidelines say?

- Weak recommendation (due to limited research)
- Benefits could include: Improvement in symptoms, less social isolation for you and your child

# Other Treatment Options

Given available research, there are no established recommendations for ARFID, but, therapies like FBT and CBT-E show promise.

Medication may also be a helpful option.

Speak with your child's healthcare provider to explore options that fit your child's needs and your capacity as a caregiver.

## For more information



*Talk to your  
healthcare  
provider*



*[nedic.com](https://www.nedic.com)  
National Eating  
Disorder  
Information Centre*



*Full length  
Canadian Practice  
Guidelines*



# Considerations

## Levels of Care

- Healthcare providers will aim to provide the least intensive level of care for your child
- Most common options, from least to most intensive, are:

## Out-Patient Treatment

- Regular in-person or virtual visits with a care team
- Treatment types: FBT, CBT-E, MFT

## Day Treatment

- Your child attends the hospital or program during the day for group-based treatment with meal support
- A variety of treatment types occur in this level of care
- Consider transportation costs and travel time required

## In-Patient Care

- Your child would be admitted to the hospital and stay overnight
- Treatment types: medical stabilization, medication, meal support
- Decreases medical risk, improves your child's ability to continue therapy in the community
- Discuss concerns and preferences for admission and discharge

## Caregiver Support

- It is vital that you receive support, especially during times when your child transitions between different levels of care and from pediatric to adult services