

Have an eating disorder? Know your treatment options

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If you have an eating disorder, it's important to know the treatment

options, Mayo Clinic experts say.

Treatment depends on the particular [eating disorder](#) and symptoms. It typically involves a combination of psychotherapy, nutrition education, medical monitoring and sometimes medication.

If [standard treatment](#) doesn't help or causes health problems, you may require hospitalization or another type of inpatient program.

Treatment also involves dealing with other potentially serious or life-threatening health problems caused by an [eating disorder](#).

They include [electrolyte imbalances](#) that can interfere with the functioning of muscles, heart and nerves; heart problems and [high blood pressure](#); digestive problems and nutrient deficiencies; mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder or substance abuse; low bone density; stunted growth; lack of menstruation; infertility and pregnancy problems, and dental problems from frequent vomiting.

Psychological therapy is the most important part of treatment for [eating disorders](#) and may last from a few months to years, the Mayo experts said. It seeks to normalize eating patterns and achieve a healthy weight, as well as to improve mood and relationships. It also aims to replace unhealthy habits with healthy ones, and teach patients how to monitor eating and moods and develop problem-solving skills. The aim is to find healthy ways to cope with stressful situations.

Your treatment team may include a mental health professional such as a psychologist or psychiatrist; a registered dietitian; medical or dental specialists to deal with other [health problems](#) caused by the [eating disorder](#), and family members, the Mayo experts said.

Working together, you'll develop a plan for treating your eating disorder, setting treatment goals and what to do if you're not able to stick with your plan.

Your treatment team can help you find nearby resources to help you meet your goals, and identify affordable [treatment options](#).

Hospitalization and outpatient programs for treating eating disorders can be costly, and insurance may not cover it fully. Discuss any financial concerns with your treatment team, the Mayo experts urged.

More information: The nonprofit National Eating Disorders Association has [help and support for people with eating disorders](#).

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