

Recommendations for Home Care of Children with Eating Disorders

1. Remove any scales from the home on which child can weigh herself. We will weigh child in the office and make decision about when to let her know her weight.
2. Watch your talk about your own weight, diet, etc. Please don't talk about your needing to lose weight.
3. Do not allow your child to watch cooking shows, read cooking magazines, etc.
4. Watch her internet usage. There are sites that are "pro anna" to which she can go which are very destructive toward recovery
5. It is easiest to think of the eating disorder as a "demon" that has taken over your child. When she acts up around food (and she will) keep cool, don't melt down, and talk to your child. If you must get mad tell your child you are angry at the anorexia, not at her, because it is continuing to make her do things that harm her.
6. YOU should be deciding on the foods your child eats and YOU should be measuring and plating them. Do not give in to your child and allow her to do it at this point. You will be able to give that task back to her when she is better. But at this point she is not strong enough to fight the anorexic thoughts and she WILL sabotage the amount she gets somehow. You have successfully fed her for her entire life. You can do it now.
7. Until told otherwise you need to sit with your child for every meal. Sometimes I allow her to eat lunch at school without you as a test, but I will let you know.
8. She should use the rest room BEFORE she eats and not be allowed to go back to the restroom until at least 1 hour after she finishes. Someone should sit with her and keep her occupied with other thoughts. The urge to purge food does get better as time goes on.
9. If possible, she should keep door cracked if in rest room so you can tell if she purges. At very least she should keep up a conversation or sing while in bathroom. Same way when she takes a shower!
10. Be prepared to take things she enjoys away to get her to eat. Cell phones, driving privileges, time with friends. Also, be prepared for some very long meals. In hospital we only give them 30 minutes, but we have more power in hospital and it always feels safer to eat in the hospital than it does at home.
11. She will try to bargain with you. Be loving but do not bargain about food.
12. Helpful resources for YOU:

- a. Eating with your Anorexic by Laura Collins
- b. NEDA Parent Toolkit <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/parent-toolkit>
- c. Help Your Teenager Beat an Eating Disorder, Second Edition, by James Lock and Daniel Le Grange.

13. A few helpful websites:

- a. www.feast-ed.org
- b. www.circummensam.com
- c. www.aroundthedinnertable.org
- d. www.maudsleyparents.org
- e. www.nationaleatingdisorders.org
 - i. <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/blog/why-your-teen-probably-won't-want-do-fbt-and-why-you-should-feel-free-do-it-anyway>
 - ii. <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/blog/how-my-mom-helped-save-my-life>

14. It would be good for her to connect with a therapist as soon as reasonably possible, now that her weight is improved. We hope that, with improvement in weight she will be able to start thinking about stressors in her life that may have kicked off the illness.

15. Remember that nothing works for every patient. Sometimes we have to change the plan, as necessary, until your daughter moves forward. However, family-based therapies, as recommended above, is the best method for most patients.

16. During day, if you need me, you will probably be able to reach me at my desk phone number: 850-431-3230. I may be in clinic, but I am the only one who checks those messages, so feel free to leave a message and I will call you back. Please do not use that number for an urgent or emergent issue!

After hours I can be reached on my cell phone at 566-4551.

D. Paul Robinson, M.D., F.A.A.P.
Adolescent Medicine