

## What are Eating Disorders?

Eating disorders are the expression of a range of food and weight issues that both men and women experience. Individuals afflicted with an eating disorder struggle with low self-esteem and an intense fear of weight gain. A common myth about eating disorders is that they are only about food and weight concerns, when in reality they are complex disorders that effect many components of a person's life and well-being.

**Anorexia Nervosa (AN)** is most often characterized by extreme weight loss. Most individuals with anorexia have very distorted body image and experience themselves as fat even if they are severely underweight. These individuals typically experience an intense fear of weight gain and may restrict their food intake to the point of starvation. Additionally, many women with anorexia stop menstruating.

**Bulimia Nervosa (BN)** is characterized by periods of secretive and/or uncontrollable binge eating. This behavior may be followed by attempts to purge the body of unwanted food, such as the abuse of laxatives, self-induced vomiting, ingestion of diet pills, food restriction or excessive exercise.

**Eating Disorders Not Otherwise Specified (ED-NOS)** is a term used to identify individuals who experience symptoms related to both AN and/or BN. They may experience all of the same conditions as for anorexia, except: the person (female) has regular periods and/or weight is in the normal range in spite of significant weight loss. They may experience the same conditions as for bulimia, except that bingeing and compensating occur less than two times per week. A third presentation is that the person's body weight is normal, but s/he uses compensatory behaviours, e.g. vomiting, after consuming a small amount of food.

ED-NOS is no less serious or severe than AN or BN. This categorization represents the fact that eating disorders are complex and symptoms can change over time.

## How to find us:



- T** The Tannery Mall, 465 Davis Drive
- M** Medical Arts Building, 581 Davis Drive
- F** Southlake Foundation, 615 Davis Drive
- P** Parking
- H** Southlake Regional Health Centre
- C** Stronach Regional Cancer Centre
- (Blue Bracket)** Bridge crossing Davis Drive. Accessible from P3 of the Parking Garage and Level 3 of the Medical Arts Building.

## For more information, please contact:

**Eating Disorders Program**  
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Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 2P9  
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[www.southlakeregional.org](http://www.southlakeregional.org)

## Young Adult Eating Disorders Program



Southlake Regional Health Centre's Young Adult Eating Disorders Program is designed to assist young adults who suffer with eating disorders to achieve normalized eating, a healthy weight and an improved relationship with their body and self. Our treatment team includes highly skilled professionals from a range of healthcare disciplines, including medicine, psychology, nutrition, social work and psychiatric consultation.

The program is developed to meet the needs of families who transition from Southlake's Child and Adolescent Eating Disorders Program, as well as young adults in the community whose needs are appropriate for out-patient treatment.

### **Our Vision**

Our treatment team respects each client's individuality and well-being, and encourages them to actively participate in their own growth and recovery. Treatment is designed to be collaborative, rather than imposed, interactive rather than passive, and personal rather than distant or neutral. We see the participation of the family as a key aspect of the recovery program. Our program fosters patient to reconnect with their feelings and helps them to listen to their bodies. Our treatment team encourages self-awareness, self-understanding and self-compassion.

### **What services are available at Southlake?**

Southlake's Young Adult Eating Disorders Program is open to individuals between the ages of 18 and 25, who live in York Region or South Simcoe County. Services may be accessed via a referral from a family physician. Individuals and their families receive a half-day assessment, which includes a medical assessment and individual/family assessment with team clinicians. Feedback and recommendations are offered at the end of this process.

### **Treatment Services**

Our program offers out-patient treatment, which means it is designed for those who are medically stable and can manage adequately in the community. Services offered may include one or more of the following: education sessions about eating disorders, group therapy, individual therapy, family therapy, nutritional counseling, medical monitoring and/or psychiatric consultation. Treatment plans are determined in conjunction with the treatment team following participation in a multidisciplinary assessment.

### **What are the some of the warning signs of eating disorders? (list is not exclusive)**

- Excessive concern about body weight and shape, and calorie intake
- Depression and/or irritability
- Noticeable change in weight (significant increase or decrease)
- Loss of menstruation
- Unusual eating habits and/or strict avoidance of certain foods
- Social isolation
- Rigid or harsh exercise regimes

### **How can concerned family members or friends help?**

- Provide the person with information to help him or her understand what eating disorders are, and the serious physical and psychological effects of these eating disorders.
- Let the person know you are concerned and are there to help.
- Find out where the person can go for support and encourage him or her to seek help.
- Try not to make comments about food, body weight, shape, or size.
- Encouraged them to speak to their family physician or a counsellor.

### **What should I do if I'm concerned I may have an eating disorder?**

- Make an appointment to speak to your family doctor about your concerns and ask him/her to provide a referral on your behalf for an assessment with a specialized eating disorder treatment program, such as the one at Southlake.
- Locate centers within your community for those with eating disorders and attend a group or information session.
- Talk to a trusted friend or family member about your worries and ask for their support to accomplish the tasks listed above.