

Eating Disorder Treatment Guidelines

For Primary Care Physicians

When treating an individual with an eating disorder:

- Understand full resolution of symptoms may take an extended period of time.
- Be part of an interdisciplinary team; ideally both a therapist and registered dietitian will also be involved.
- Know the weight monitoring protocol. It's not helpful to have weight monitored at several sites as differences in scales can lead to patient anxiety.
- **NEVER** share weight with the patient or family. They are likely being weighed "blind" by the RD. This may mean **NOT** giving patient a written or electronic visit summary.
- Do not try to persuade or argue with a patient regarding body image distortion. It is significant and deeply ingrained. That work is best left to the therapist.
- Be consistent, warm, but firm. Largely due to anxiety, patients may try to manipulate their way out of compliance. Validate feelings and be empathic but remain firm regarding the expected behaviors.
- Don't give permission for increased activity or participation in sports without input from the treatment team.
- If a higher level of care becomes necessary, you can help by supporting the recommendation of the team, and advocating with the insurance company/payor as needed.