



When to consider: Does my child have an eating disorder?

Eating disorders are not always easy to detect. Signs and symptoms of an eating disorder vary across kids and teens. A child who is struggling with eating disorders may:

- Have an excessive focus on eating healthy
- Frequently body check or cover their body with heavy or baggy clothes
- Feel guilty with certain foods
- Follow strict food rules
- Avoid social situations to avoid having to eat certain foods or eat in public.

Some eating disorders, such as Bulimia Nervosa, are characterized by extreme overeating followed by excessive guilt that leads to excessive exercise, purging (vomiting), laxative abuse, or food avoidance. ARFID (Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder) is characterized by low food intake due to fear of an aversive event such as becoming sick or vomiting, simply having little to no interest in food, or have extreme picky eating behaviors based on textures or colors or odors.

The SCOFF Questionnaire for Eating Disorders

The SCOFF Questionnaire is a simple, five-question screening measure to assess the possible presence for eating disorders. The SCOFF questionnaire is an acronym (Sick, Control, One, Fast, & Food). This questionnaire serves as merely as a base for understanding where your child may fall, and it may not identify those with ARFID. These questions can easily be adapted to fit any age or culture. Consider the following:

1. Does (your child) make (themselves) **Sick** (including vomiting) because (they) feel uncomfortably full?
2. Does (your child) worry that (they) have lost **Control** over how much (they) eat?
3. Has (your child) recently lost more than **One** stone (14lb) in a 3 month period?
4. Does (your child) think (they) are too **Fat**, even though others say (they) are too thin?
5. Would you say that **Food** dominates (their) life?

For every “yes,” that is one point. A score of 2 or more indicates a likely eating disorder.

If that is the case, there are resources available. Please contact our offices to make an appointment.