

Parents warned over sharp rise in children with eating disorders

Parents are being warned to look out for any signs that their child may be suffering from an eating disorder.

🕒 Tuesday 29 December 2020 10:53, UK



There are concerns that a higher number of children are needing hospital treatment for eating disorders



T Why you can trust Sky News >

Hospital admissions for children with eating disorders have risen by almost a fifth in two years, according to new figures.

NHS Digital data for England shows there were 21,794 admissions for eating disorders in all age groups in 2019-20, up 13% from 2018-19 and 32% from 2017-18.

For children under 18, there were 4,962 admissions - up 9% from 2018-19 and 19% from 2017-18.

The vast majority of these were teenagers - but some 418 admissions in 2019-20 were for 10 to 12-year-olds.



November: Teenager's anorexia death involved 'neglect'

Almost half of the 418 admissions among 10 to 12-year-olds were for girls with anorexia while there were also admissions for a range of eating disorders among children under 10.

Advertisement

Advertisement

The data was obtained by the PA news agency.

Tom Madders, director of campaigns at the charity Young Minds, said: "While there have been improvements in waiting times for eating disorder services for children in recent years, it can still be difficult for them to get the help they need before they reach crisis point."

Hospital admissions for anorexia rose 9% from 8,090 in 2018-19 to 8,796 in 2019-20, while bulimia admissions rose 15% from 4,253 to 4,904.

Provisional data for the first three months of the pandemic shutdown show a drop in admissions for anorexia but a rise in bulimia.

Why are we so scared of looking fat?



Dr Karen Street, officer for child mental health at the RCPCH, said eating disorders are often accompanied by "quite small changes" such as refusing to eat previously enjoyed foods.

"If you've noticed a difference in the way your child or teenager approaches food and exercise and it concerns you, talk to them about what's normal and what is not - often those with eating disorders will try to convince you all is okay but trust your instincts."

Claire Murdoch, NHS England's mental health director, said: "The pandemic has turned lives upside down and hit young people particularly hard.

"While a record high number of young people are in fact getting care for eating disorders, it is sadly a likely fact of the pandemic's impact that more young people will need to seek out support for mental ill health, which is why the NHS is expanding care every year and continues to offer face-to-face appointments and inpatient care when needed while providing the option of phone and video consultations and online support where appropriate."



About Sky News



Sky News Services



Sky Channels



More Sky Sites



Terms & Conditions

Privacy & Cookies

Privacy Options

Accessibility

Contact Us



© 2021 Sky UK