



## **Anorexia Nervosa within the Inpatient Paediatric setting: Protocol for Medical / Nursing management (including dietetic guidelines)**

Royal United Hospital, Bath  
Great Western Hospital, Swindon  
Salisbury District Hospital, Salisbury

### INTRODUCTION

This protocol has been developed jointly between TEDS (CAMHS eating disorder service) and paediatric services at the above hospitals. The protocol is designed to support staff in the management of anorexia nervosa when a young person requires paediatric admission due to medical complications secondary to extreme weight loss and/or extreme dietary restriction.

Paediatric admission will only be arranged when a young person requires medical treatment due to complications arising from severe anorexia nervosa which cannot be safely managed on an outpatient basis. Complications include:

- Severe emaciation with high risk of refeeding syndrome
- Severe emaciation requiring nasogastric feeding
- Rapid uncontrolled weight loss
- Severe dehydration
- Severe hypotension / electrolyte imbalance / other medical sequelae of anorexia

The purpose of paediatric admission is medical treatment and stabilisation and initiation of weight gain. Nasogastric feeding may be required as a last resort.

The management of mealtimes on the paediatric ward will be the crucial part of the young person's medical treatment: it is essential staff recognise this and see it as equal in importance to any prescribed treatment. Mealtime management is often the only intervention that is likely to lead to improvement in weight, nutritional status and mental state thereby hastening early recovery and discharge.

The paediatric ward will not be used to manage a young person with anorexia nervosa as an alternative to a mental health unit due to lack of resources. Discharge will usually be to the patient's home with TEDS follow up, or occasionally onward referral to a mental health unit.

This protocol has been developed after working with paediatric ward staff over a number of years and are based on nursing staff feedback on the difficulties of managing the refeeding of young people with severe eating disorders on the ward.

### ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff have a responsibility to ensure the care provided to patients is safe and of a high standard of quality. It is the responsibility of all staff involved with the care and treatment of young people to ensure they are aware of this protocol and adhere to its contents.