

Minimum Standards of Care for Children and Adolescent Inpatient Eating Disorder Admissions in NSW Health Facilities.

These minimum standards are designed for general paediatric units across NSW Health, they are not designed for treatment of eating disorder patients in mental health or specialty eating disorder units where the level of care and acuity is expected to be greater than a general paediatric unit would manage.

1. Medically unstable patients must be cared for in a ward where there is capacity to manage and monitor medical instability as per clinical need including; NG tube insertion and feeding, cardiac monitoring, pathology, supplements (phosphate and multivitamins), warming (bair hugger/warmed blankets/overhead heater).
2. Medical instability requires a medical admission with young people admitted under a paediatrician (or GP in rural and remote settings with support from a quaternary centre) for care and management as guided by the NSW Health Eating Disorder Toolkit¹. Psychiatry consultation is recommended with ongoing involvement as determined by the psychiatrist.
3. Patients should have an initial dietitian assessment and ongoing dietitian consultation for NG feeds, meals plans and parental education for all patients.
4. A Multi-Disciplinary Team Meeting is recommended at least weekly. This should include the paediatrician (or GP in rural and remote areas) along with dietitian, social work, nursing, psychiatry service representative and other allied health. Some of these may attend virtually depending on availability. Community treating team members should ideally be invited to MDT prior to discharge.
5. Constant observation by a 1:1 “special” nurse is recommended for the first 48 hours of admission (72 hours if the admission commences on a Friday in order to cover the weekend)² and then ongoing as required - especially if eating disorder behaviour interferes with treatment or there are comorbid mental health diagnosis or self harm.
6. There should be direct supervision of all meals and snacks by trained staff (even when parents/families are present) including post meal supervision. Staff supervising meals should have a minimum level of training (for example; “Spot the red flags” in MHL or Meal Support online learning through the [InsideOut Institute](#)) to optimise staff confidence and skill in meal supervision, to optimise patient outcomes, and to minimise patient / family distress and the duration of hospital admission.
7. A clear plan should be in place prior to discharge with contact between the treating community team and inpatient team. At a minimum this should include identification of an ongoing care provider and adequate handover of care prior to discharge into the community. There should be timely follow up (within 1-2 weeks of discharge) with medical and mental health providers. Public community mental health management should be available for ongoing eating disorder treatment. Private options may also be available.
8. Inpatient teams should provide families and carers with information and education regarding diagnosis and management.

Each LHD should also have;

- Clear local guidelines and pathways for advice and escalation for each hospital. For example level 2 or 3 units to liaise with level 4 units within their LHD and transfer patients if they are unable to manage the patient in their hospital. This enables the patient to be cared for as close to home as possible.
- Access to education and support for staff education and training. Training may include in-services from the local Eating Disorder Coordinator, tertiary services, medical leads or online learning including online modules from InsideOut (The Essentials: Training Clinicians in Eating Disorders; The Foundations of Eating Disorders; Eating Disorder Inpatient Management: Child and Adolescent Package 2020; Dietitian Essentials Treatment of Eating Disorders, Meal support in the hospital setting).
- Access to links and written resources for carers.

References:

1. NSW Ministry of Health (2018) NSW Eating Disorders Toolkit: A practice-based guide to the inpatient management of children and adolescents with eating disorders, Sydney, Australia.
2. InsideOut Institute (2020). Nursing Care. Engagement and Observation for People with Eating Disorders in General Inpatient Areas including Emergency Departments, Sydney, Australia. <https://insideoutinstitute.org.au/assets/individual-patient-observation-for-people-with-eating-disorders-guideline-3-.pdf>