

Medical Monitoring in Eating Disorders	Which ED	Effect of starvation / malnutrition	Frequency of review or repeat management	Indications for medical admission to manage acute severe malnutrition & prevent refeeding syndrome	
				Child & Adolescent	Adult
Vital signs: Lying & standing BP, looking for orthostatic changes & postural tachycardia. HR Core Temperature	AN AAN BN AN like illnesses AFRID	Indicators of autonomic & metabolic adaptation to starvation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On initial assessment • At least weekly for clients significantly underweight or who have lost significant weight or are continuing to lose weight; • At least weekly: frequent self-induced vomiting or laxative misuse • Regularly if fluid depleted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradycardia - HR< 50bpm • Postural tachycardia > 20bpm increase on standing • Blood pressure <80/50mmHg • Orthostatic hypotension >20 mmHg systolic drop on standing • fainting • Hypothermia (< 35.5°C) • Poor peripheral perfusion • Arrhythmia (QTc >450msec) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resting HR ≤ 40bpm or >120bpm • Postural tachycardia > 20bpm increase on standing • Systolic BP < 80mmHg • Orthostatic hypotension >20 mmHg systolic drop on standing • Hypothermia (<35°C) • Blood sugar <2.5mmol/l
Blood tests: Full Blood Examination Liver Function Test Urea, Electrolytes & Creatinine Phosphate, Calcium & Magnesium	AN AAN BN AN like illnesses AFRID	Low WCC / low neutrophil count can indicate starvation induced bone marrow suppression Abnormal LFTs can indicate starvation or refeeding induced hepatitis (transaminases)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On initial assessment • Acute food refusal • Weekly: Ongoing weight loss > 0.5kg / week • Weekly: frequent self-induced vomiting or laxative misuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypokalaemia • Hyponatraemia • Hypophosphataemia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypokalaemia • Hyponatraemia • Hypophosphataemia
ECG	AN AAN BN AN like illnesses AFRID	If Bradycardia present when awake, it will be more severe when asleep & is associated with the autonomic suppression seen in adaptation to starvation. Small voltages indicate a thinner (wasted) heart wall		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrhythmia • Rate< 50bpm • Prolonged QT interval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrhythmias • Rate< 40bpm • Prolonged QT interval
Body weight % change in body weight Charting / graphing %mBMI (children & adolescents)	AN AAN BN AN like illnesses AFRID	Loss of body weight in children & adolescents is abnormal. Short term loss with no recovery, and / or faltering of height growth is an alert for review and intervention	On initial assessment. Weekly for clients significantly underweight, continuing to lose weight, or experience marked weight fluctuations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% loss of body weight • < 70% mBMI • 0.5 – 1kg weight loss (over several weeks) • < 3rd percentile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >1kg ongoing weight loss (over several weeks) • BMI< 13
Height	AN AAN BN AN like illnesses AFRID	Prolonged poor nutrition indicated by static height or height not following previous developmental percentile course > 6 – 12 months.	On initial assessment & monthly review in clients who should be growing	N/A	N/A
Micronutrients: Vitamin B12 Folate Iron Studies	All eating disorders	May be impaired due to general malnutrition or restricted food variety	On initial assessment & reviewed as clinically indicated Supplement as indicated	N/A	N/A

Medical Monitoring in Eating Disorders	Which ED	Effect of starvation / malnutrition	Frequency of review or repeat management	Indications for medical admission to manage acute severe malnutrition & prevent refeeding syndrome	
				Child & Adolescent	Adult
Vit D			Encourage improved food variety & quantity		
Menstrual function: frequency & quality of menses ovarian ultra sound	All eating disorders	Starvation induced suppression of oestrogen pituitary axis Ovarian ultrasound may be helpful in indicating return of menses & minimal healthy weight If other indicators are insufficient	Review menstrual function on initial assessment & routinely , to note changes	N/A	N/A
Other behaviours: Eating & Drinking: Severe food restriction or acute food refusal Severe fluid restriction or acute fluid refusal Increased frequency of purging behaviours Physical Activity: Exercise, incidental activity & weight controlling physical activity	All eating disorders	Restriction of food (& fluids) is a core behaviour/symptom in many EDs Physical activity aimed at weight control may be a primary weight control behaviour, or a behaviour to compensate for binge eating Starved individuals may have difficulties with restlessness	Acute worsening in any of these symptoms requires increased frequency of medical monitoring; medical admission may be indicated	Acute food & / or fluid refusal > 3days	Acute food & / or fluid refusal > 3 – 5 days
Bone Bone density assessment	AN AAN BN AN like illnesses AFRID	Starvation induced osteopenia & osteoporosis Related to suppression of ovulation & cortisol changes Swift weight & nutrition status recovery is the best protection for bone mineral status.	Consider bone mineral density scan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children & young people > 1 year underweight (corrected for bone age in those with faltering growth) Adults > 2 years underweight Scan earlier if experiencing bone pain or recurrent fractures Review: no more than yearly unless experiencing bone pain or recurrent fractures See guidelines for endocrine interventions	N/A	N/A

References:

National Institute of Clinical Excellence.2017. Eating disorders: recognition and treatment NG69

RANZCP.2014. Clinical practice guidelines for the treatment of eating disorders. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry. Vol. 48(11) 1-62

© Copyright 2021; All contents copyright Centre of Excellence in Eating Disorders

Published: September 2021 | Review date: June 2023