

EMERGENCY TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS OF ANOREXIC TEENS



HOW TO TAP INTO YOUR POWER
AS A PARENT TO GET YOUR TEEN
TO EAT MORE NOW

Five Steps To Get Your Teen To Eat

1 DECIDE HOW YOU WANT TO FEEL

When your anorexic teen is crying, refusing to eat, throwing food, or worse, your brain will want you to freak out. Instead of reacting with fear, anger, or overwhelm, decide ahead of time how you want to feel. How would you rather feel? Confident? Compassionate? Loving? Try to separate your feelings toward your child from your feelings about the anorexia.

2 CHOOSE A BELIEF THAT CREATES THAT FEELING

What do you believe that makes you feel confident? Loving? Compassionate? Focus on this belief throughout each meal and snack.

Examples: I love her no matter what. I am capable of doing whatever it takes to help my child. My love is stronger than the anorexia.

3 PLAN RESPONSES TO RESISTANCE IN ADVANCE

Before every meal or snack, prepare short statements to use in response to your teen's resistance to eating. Resistance includes any anorexic behaviors that are interfering with your teen's ability to eat and restore her weight: crying, yelling, throwing food, pushing food around on plate, refusal to eat, violence, self-harm, etc. Use firm but compassionate phrases, and avoid lecturing or reassuring your teen.

Examples: Food is your medicine. You can trust me. This is what you need. (Avoid talking about fat, calories, her weight, ingredients in the food, and healthy eating).

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4 PLAN DISTRACTIONS AHEAD OF TIME

Prepare a variety of creative distractions your family can use to help ease the tension during meals. The whole family can collaborate on this step. Siblings are often very helpful with distraction techniques..

Examples: Watch funny videos. Listen to music. Play a family game. Do a crossword puzzle together. Tell jokes or stories. Watch TV or a movie.

5 PREPARE AND PLATE FOOD WITHOUT YOUR TEEN

Until your teen is able to make safe and appropriate decisions about eating, parents make all food-related choices for her. Parents plan all meals and snacks, do the grocery shopping, prepare the food, cook the meals, choose the snacks, decide on serving sizes, and plate the food outside the presence of their anorexic teen. Her only job right now is to eat the food you put on her plate.



THE
PEACEMEAL
COACH

DAILY FOOD AND FEELINGS PLANNER

See steps 1-4 of 5-step Parent Guide

1

2

3

4

meal

feeling

belief

response

distraction

notes

breakfast

snack

lunch

snack

dinner

dessert/
snack



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