



Eating disorder treatment options – adults

This factsheet provides an overview of the treatment options for people in Victoria over the age of 18. After reading this page we encourage you to speak with your GP or other health professional to determine the most suitable course of treatment for you or your loved one.

Getting started

There is good evidence that generally, the quicker you start treatment for an eating disorder, the shorter the time will be until you are recovered. However, try to remember that anyone can recover, even if you have been experiencing your eating disorder for a long time.

Treatment overview

Eating disorder treatment for adults in Victoria is structured into 3-tiers. .

- ✔ **Community Based Treatment**
- ✔ **Day Programs**
- ✔ **Inpatient treatment**

In general, treatment will involve a combination of the following:

- ✔ Psychotherapy (therapy, counselling or psychological intervention usually through a psychologist, psychiatrist or mental health social worker)
- ✔ Physical health management (usually through a GP or a team of medical professionals in an inpatient setting)
- ✔ Nutritional counselling (usually through an Accredited Practising Dietitian)
- ✔ Self-help (learning and avoiding triggers, applying coping skills, attending support groups etc.)

Treatment options are available in both the public and private system.

If you access treatment via the public health system, you will be supported by your local Adult Mental Health Service (AHMS), which is geographically based. To find your local AMHS service, please visit www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealthservices/adult/index.htm or speak to your GP.

Community based treatment

Community based treatment refers to sessions or programs (therapeutic and dietetic) that can occur around a person's everyday life, such as work or study.

Most people with an eating disorder will access community based treatment.

Community based treatment can be accessed via the public system and the private system. Commonly, people with eating disorders will access **Medicare subsidies** to make community based treatment with private practitioners, such as psychologists and dietitians, more affordable.

If you need help finding suitable practitioners in your geographic area, please get in touch with the EDV Hub on 1300 550 236 submit an enquiry via the EDV website.

Outpatient treatment:

Another form of community based treatment is outpatient treatment. Outpatient treatment is connected to public and private hospitals, and can either be accessed on its own, or as a step-down from inpatient treatment.

Many people with eating disorders do not need 24-hour care, but they do need ongoing treatment. These people may attend outpatient units on a regular basis, where they may be seen by a team of health professionals from many different disciplines, or they may see a solo practitioner like a dietitian, a psychologist or a psychiatrist. People are encouraged to maintain everyday responsibilities while attending an outpatient program, like attending school/university or going to work.

Public outpatient treatment programs in Victoria

- ✔ *Monash Health Wellness and Recovery Centre (WRC) Outpatient program* – for people who reside in the catchments areas of Southern Health, Peninsula Health and Gippsland regions – www.monashhealth.org/services/eating-disorders/.
- ✔ *NorthWest Mental Health Eating Disorder Outpatient Program* – for people who reside in the catchment areas of NorthWestern Mental Health, and South West (Werribee Mercy) metropolitan Mental Health regions and Grampians (Ballarat), Loddon-Campaspe, Northern Mallee and Glenelg (South West Victoria) regional and rural Mental Health regions and Barwon South Western Regions) - www.nwmh.org.au/professionals/services/specialty-services/eating-disorders-program/outpatient-clini

Day program treatment

Day programs provide a structured day with supervised or supported meals and eating, along with ongoing therapy during the daytime.

Day programs can be up to five days a week and allow the individual to live at home and benefit from family interaction overnight and at weekends. Day programs are offered in the public and private sector and provide an intermediary level of support for someone who is recovering from an eating disorder.

Public day programs in Victoria

- ✓ **NorthWest Mental Health Eating Disorder Day Program** – for people who reside in Western Metropolitan Melbourne and Western Victoria (Loddon Mallee, Grampians and Barwon South Western Regions) www.nwmh.org.au/professionals/services/specialty-services/eating-disorders-program.
- ✓ **Body Image Eating Disorders Treatment and Recovery Service (BETRS)** – for people who reside in the catchments areas of the Northern and Eastern Area Mental Health Services of metropolitan Melbourne, and the Goulburn and North Eastern Hume Area mental Health Services of rural Victoria – www.svhm.org.au/our-services/departments-and-services/b/body-image-eating-disorders-treatment-and-recovery-service-betrs
- ✓ **Monash Health Eating Disorders Butterfly Day Program (up to age 24)** – for people who reside in the catchment areas of Southern Health, Peninsula Health and Gippsland regions – www.monashhealth.org/services/eating-disorders/

Private day programs in Victoria

- ✓ **The Melbourne Clinic Eating Disorders Unit Day Program** – as this is private there are no catchment requirements and private health insurance is recommended – www.themelbourneclinic.com.au/service/eating-disorders.

Inpatient treatment

Inpatient treatment programs may be required for someone who is acutely medically unwell or has severe symptoms. Inpatient programs can be in a specialized eating disorder ward in a hospital, in a medical or mental health unit, or in a private clinic. 24-hour support and care is provided.

Inpatient programs generally focus first on medical stabilisation and weight restoration. However, inpatient treatment can also be suitable for someone who doesn't require medical stabilisation but still requires 24-hour support due to self-harm, suicidal thoughts and eating disorder behaviours.

People with Anorexia Nervosa in particular may be admitted to hospital for weight stabilisation. A range of medical interventions may be required with inpatient treatment.

Public inpatient programs in Victoria

- ✓ **The Monash Health Wellness and Recovery Centre Eating Disorder Service** – for people who reside in the catchments areas of Southern Health, Peninsula Health and Gippsland regions - [www.monashhealth.org/services/eating-disorders/ eating-disorders](http://www.monashhealth.org/services/eating-disorders/eating-disorders).

- ✓ **NorthWest Mental Health Eating Disorder Inpatient Program** – for people who reside in the catchment areas of Western Metropolitan Melbourne and Western Victoria (Loddon Mallee, Grampians and Barwon South Western Regions) - www.nwmh.org.au/professionals/services/specialty-services/eating-disorders-program/inpatient-program.

- ✓ **The Mood and Eating Disorder Program (collaboration with St. Vincent's Melbourne and Austin Health)** – for people who reside in the catchment areas of the Northern and Eastern Area Mental Health Services of metropolitan Melbourne, and the Goulburn and North Eastern Hume Area mental Health Services of rural Victoria

Please note that whilst some hospitals may not have specialist eating disorder inpatient programs, they may still accept individuals for medical care and weight stabilization. This is particularly relevant in rural and regional Victoria.

Private day programs in Victoria

- ✓ **The Melbourne Clinic Eating Disorders Inpatient Program** – as this is private there are no catchment requirements and private health insurance is recommended – www.themelbourneclinic.com.au/services/eating-disorders.
- ✓ **The Geelong Clinic Inpatient Learn to Eat at Peace (LEAP) and Proactive Recovery Enhancement Program (PREP)** – as this is private there are no catchment requirements and private health insurance is recommended – www.thegeelongclinic.com.au/services/eating-disorders.