

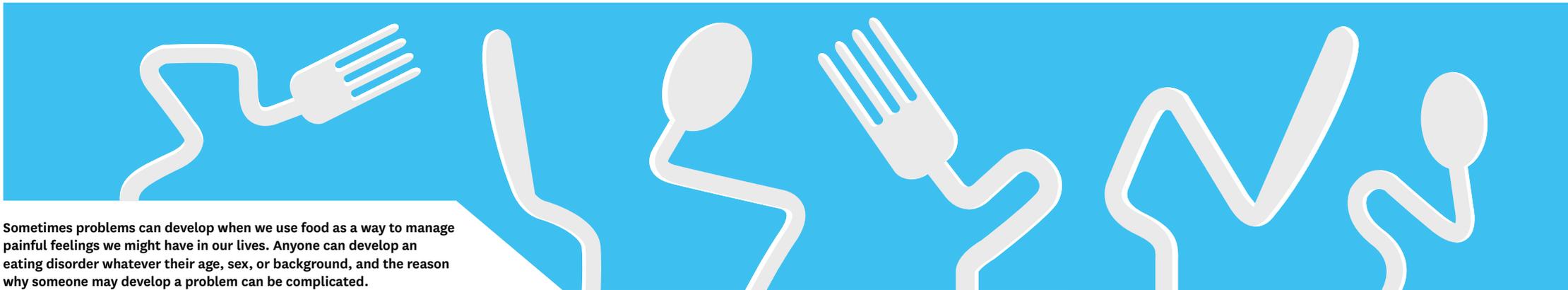
The background is a solid light blue color. It is decorated with several dark blue, stylized icons of eating utensils. There are two spoons and two forks scattered across the page. The icons are simple, with rounded heads for the spoons and four tines for the forks. The text 'Eating Problems' is centered in the middle of the page in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

# Eating Problems

**OFF THE RECORD** Bristol

The background features a repeating pattern of stylized, dark blue icons representing a fork, a spoon, and a knife. The icons are simple and graphic, with the fork having four tines, the spoon having a rounded bowl, and the knife having a straight blade. They are scattered across the light blue background, some overlapping each other.

**Food plays a big part in our lives: not only is it essential for our health and development but sharing food and eating together has an important role in how we socialise and spend time together.**



Sometimes problems can develop when we use food as a way to manage painful feelings we might have in our lives. Anyone can develop an eating disorder whatever their age, sex, or background, and the reason why someone may develop a problem can be complicated.

#### Some common reasons include:

- Low self-esteem
- Disliking the way you look (this is also about low self-esteem)
- Coping with stress
- Dealing with a difficult issue or trauma in the past or present

Certain ways of controlling the food we eat can become very serious and interfere with our ability to enjoy life. Some of these are described briefly below.

#### Anorexia

This is when people radically limit the amount of food that they eat. They may do this in addition to doing lots of exercise which means that they always keep their weight very low. People with anorexia often believe that they still need to lose weight even when their body weight has dropped to a limit that is dangerous to their health.

#### Did you know?

According to NHS figures 1 in 250 teenage girls and young women and 1 in 2000 teenage boys and young men have anorexia.

#### Bulimia

People who have bulimia will eat food and then try to get rid of what they have eaten by making themselves sick or using laxatives to cause diarrhoea. It's not uncommon for people to go to great lengths to hide their behaviour from their friends and family, which can lead to some people feeling guilty and shameful about keeping the habit a secret.

#### Binge Eating

When someone is said to binge this means that they overeat, consuming lots of food uncontrollably in one sitting. They may feel very guilty about the amount of food they have eaten and only binge in secret.

#### The Consequences

Eating problems come in lots of different forms and are not limited to the types in the descriptions above. However, what they all have in common is that they are very upsetting for the person experiencing them and, if they are left to continue, they can lead to serious physical health problems. Eating too little or too much (for whatever reason) can have serious effects on your physical health. In extreme cases the stress placed on the body and the damage caused can be permanent and in some cases even fatal.

## Remember!

You don't have to do this on your own! Many of us at some stage will try out different eating habits as we go through life. We might decide to eat more or less of certain foods because we feel they have a positive effect on our health or decide to go vegetarian or vegan because of our own values and beliefs.

If your eating habits are causing you to worry or you feel that you need to keep them a secret, then it might be good idea to talk to someone you trust.

The eating problem could be covering up lots of upsetting feelings that you have and sometimes people find that making sense of what is behind the eating problem can help them to start eating again in a more healthy way.

#### Get in touch!

Call us: 0808 808 9120

Text us: 0789 688 0811

Email us: [confidential@otrbristol.org.uk](mailto:confidential@otrbristol.org.uk)