UC San Diego Health’s Eating Disorders Center is an internationally recognized Center of Excellence, dedicated to improving the lives of those with eating disorders.

Our treatment programs are led by world-renowned eating disorders specialists and based on clinically proven methods for lasting recovery and wellness. In addition, we tailor treatment to each person and family’s unique situation and emphasize compassion and warmth in our care approach. With a team of experts for each patient, we comprehensively address the complexities of eating disorders, helping you or a loved one establish a healthy relationship with food and eating, and build a life worth living.
Individualized and Family Based Treatment

UC San Diego Health’s Eating Disorders Center is one of the largest and most respected single-site programs in the nation.

Treatment Philosophy

We view eating disorders as biologically rooted brain disorders. We strongly believe that people do not choose to have eating disorders and families do not cause eating disorders. We invite families to be a part of the treating team, as they are critical to recovery and relapse prevention.

Our therapy is designed to help people reclaim their brains from constant thoughts about food and weight. People work with their treatment team to decrease worrying and depression, and increase joy. Our clinicians are experts in helping people end harmful behaviors such as unhealthy dieting, binging, purging, excessive exercise, substance use and self-harm.

Treatment Components

Our center houses three separate clinics for pediatric, adolescent and adult patients — to better address the specific developmental issues of different age groups.

The foundations of our treatment programs are Family Based Treatment (FBT) for children, adolescents and young adults, and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) for patients of all ages. These approaches are the gold standards for treating eating disorders successfully.

Our treatment plans include:

Assessment – Every family or individual receives a free clinical assessment for diagnostic and treatment planning purposes. This assessment is the first step in creating your individualized treatment plan.

Individual therapy – We offer one-on-one DBT therapy or other evidence-based treatments.

Group therapy – Your treatment plan may include DBT skills groups, cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness, art therapy and more.

Family therapy – To support the entire family, we provide 10+ hours per week of family therapy, family meals, family skills groups and parent education.

Therapeutic meals – Our chefs prepare meals daily using fresh ingredients. Dietitians and therapists attend all meals, providing individual support as needed during meal time.

Dietary support – Our team hosts restaurant outings, cooking classes, meal planning and weekly individual sessions with your dietitian to prepare you for life after treatment.

Phone support – We are available evenings and weekends to keep patients and families on track during “off” hours.

Psychiatric and medical support – Your ongoing medical monitoring may include labs, vitals and weekly psychiatric sessions.

Conditions Treated

We treat all types of eating disorders, including:

- Anorexia nervosa
- Avoidant restrictive food intake disorder
- Binge eating disorder
- Bulimia nervosa

Because eating disorders rarely occur in isolation, we have specialists on our treatment teams to also address:

- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Substance use disorder
- Generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and phobias
- Mood disorders, such as depression and bipolar disorder
- Suicidal thoughts
- Borderline personality disorder

Levels of Care

Our treatment programs are offered at all levels of care, including:

- Medical inpatient care (children, adolescents and young adults only) — We offer one of the nation’s only inpatient units specializing in treating eating disorders for these groups.
- Day treatment or partial-hospitalization
- Intensive outpatient program
- One-week intensive family therapy
- Clinic visits

Your Care Team

Each patient is assigned a dedicated team of full-time clinicians who are here to help you every day of your recovery. Your team includes:

- Psychiatrist
- Nurse
- Individual therapist
- Family or couple’s therapist
- Dietitian

Research and Teaching

In addition to patient care, we are committed to advancing treatments for eating disorders and training the next generation of clinicians to be knowledgeable, compassionate caregivers. Our research is currently focused on understanding the neurobiological basis of eating disorders, using brain imaging and genetic analyses. Our findings are translated into better treatments for people with eating disorders.