



Understanding & Identifying

Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder in Youth

Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) is a serious condition characterized by a restricted intake of food due to sensory sensitivities, fear of negative outcomes (e.g., choking, allergies, vomiting), or lack of interest in food. Unlike eating disorders, ARFID is not driven by body image concerns but can lead to severe nutritional deficiencies, reliance on supplements, and, in extreme cases, tube feeding.

Key Symptoms & Signs of ARFID

Avoidance of Food Due to Sensory Issues

Aversion to textures, colors, or smells of certain foods.

Lack of Interest in Eating or Food

Limited food intake, rapid satiety, difficulty recognizing hunger cues, or general disinterest in food.

Fear of Consequences of Eating

Anxiety or fear around potential choking, vomiting, allergies or other adverse reactions.

Impact on Health and Development

Weight loss, nutritional deficiencies, dependence on supplements, or interference with growth and development.

Red Flags for ARFID in Youth

- ! Limited variety of foods or persistent avoidance of specific food textures and flavors.
- ! Restrictive eating due to fear of choking, vomiting, or an allergic reaction.
- ! Noticeable weight loss or stunted growth in a previously healthy child.
- ! Increased family stress around mealtime or unusual mealtime rituals.
- ! Dependence on nutritional supplements due to inadequate dietary intake.
- ! Persistent forgetfulness of eating.

Use the ARFID Questionnaire on the back to assess ARFID tendencies and identify potential areas of concern.

Questions to Ask

Help determine if an Anxiety Institute consultation would be beneficial.

Eating Habits:

- Do you avoid certain foods because of how they look, smell, or feel?
- Are there foods that you used to eat but now can't bring yourself to eat?
- Would you describe yourself as a picky eater?

Fear of Eating Consequences:

- Do you worry that eating certain foods might make you feel sick, choke, or vomit?
- Have you had a bad experience with eating (e.g., choking, gagging) that now makes you avoid certain foods?

Lack of Interest:

- Do you regularly forget to eat meals?
- Does it seem like you have less of an appetite compared to others?
- Is feeling full uncomfortable?

Food Variety:

- Do you eat a very limited number of foods?
- Are there entire food groups you avoid (e.g., vegetables, proteins, or fruits)?

Impact on Daily Life:

- Does your eating behavior make it hard to eat at school, with friends, or at family meals?
- Do you avoid situations like school lunches, birthday parties, or eating out because of your eating habits?

Physical and Emotional Effects:

- Have you noticed changes in your weight, energy levels, or overall health because of how you eat?
- Do you feel anxious or upset when you're expected to eat foods you don't like or avoid?

Comprehensive Treatment at Anxiety Institute

Anxiety Institute's transdiagnostic model addresses the cognitive and emotional patterns shared by ARFID, anxiety, and OCD, offering a comprehensive path to recovery. Our treatment integrates Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for ARFID (CBT-AR), which aims to stabilize nutrition, increase food variety, and reduce social and emotional impairment. Additionally, Exposure Response Prevention (ERP) is used within CBT-AR to gradually reduce food avoidance behaviors, helping patients develop a healthier, more varied diet and reducing anxiety related to eating.

We're here to help Anxiety Institute

For referrals or more information on our ARFID treatment programs, please contact us:

(844) 881-1846

anxietyinstitute.com