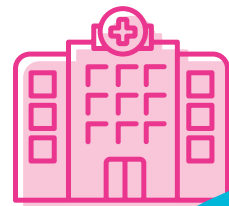




National Eating Disorder Information Centre

www.nedic.ca

Preparing for Inpatient or Residential Eating Disorder Treatment





Who is this tipsheet for?

This tipsheet was created to help ADHDers and Autistic people prepare for inpatient or residential eating disorder treatment.



What is inpatient treatment?

- Takes place in a hospital setting
- In hospitals with a specialized eating disorder unit, it's typically on the same floor as the general psychiatry unit
- Covered by provincial/territorial health insurance
- Wait times to access may be lengthy
- There may be a rigid program structure and strict rules to follow



What is residential treatment?

- Takes place in a home-like setting
- Often not covered by provincial/territorial health insurance; can therefore be very costly, especially if paying out of pocket
- May be partially or fully paid for by private health insurance plans; you may have coverage through a parent's or your own workplace insurance
- Typically quicker to access than inpatient treatment due to shorter wait times
- Can be more flexible and accommodating than inpatient treatment



What are things to keep in mind about inpatient treatment?

- Hospitals are busy places with lots of noise and stimulation
- You might need to tell staff about accommodations you need to feel safe and supported
- You might be the only patient in an eating disorder unit with ADHD and/or Autism
- The main treatment approaches that hospitals use for eating disorders, enhanced cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT-E) and dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), were not originally developed to accommodate neurodivergence
- If you have ARFID, you may need to educate your care providers and advocate for yourself more than patients with other eating disorder diagnoses

What might you want to ask before going to inpatient treatment?

Note: Availability of information varies between hospitals

- ☐ What is the wait time?
- ☐ I experience difficulties with ____; are accommodations for this possible? (see the list below for examples)
- ☐ I have specific dietary needs; can the hospital meet my needs for ____?
- ☐ Will I be allowed visitors?
- ☐ Is it possible to get a private room covered by public health insurance?
- ☐ Is there a handbook that outlines the unit's rules that I can read ahead of time?
- ☐ If I'm also interested in spiritual care, could I be connected to a provider?

What accommodations MIGHT be available?

Note: These can vary widely between hospitals

- Some menu flexibility
- Use of headphones or ear defenders around the unit and in the dining room
- Permission to bring certain 'safe' foods
- Access in advance to a copy of your chosen menu
- Access to written copies of the rules and daily schedule
- Support in creating a meltdown/shutdown plan
- Use of your preferred communication methods

What might you want to pack for an inpatient or residential stay?

- ☐ Comfort items, like stuffed animals
- ☐ Comfortable clothing and indoor footwear (slippers or slip-on shoes)
- ☐ Headphones, ear defenders, and/or earplugs
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Communication aids, like cards and/or augmentative and alternative tools
- ☐ Short charging cords (under 15 centimetres or 6 inches), cord blocks, and a power bank
- ☐ 'Safe' foods (if allowed)
- ☐ Fidget toys and sensory tools
- ☐ Bedding and blankets (if allowed and desired)
- ☐ Medications (if allowed)
- ☐ Cellphone
- ☐ Activities to do during downtime

What if I'm still anxious about treatment?

Going to inpatient or residential treatment can be a big change in routine. It's normal to feel a mix of emotions, including nervous and overwhelmed. Recognizing your needs and preparing ahead can make the transition easier. Here are some things that might help:

- Make a to-do list
- Keep your routines during treatment similar to the routines you practice at home, when possible
- Schedule sensory time to self-regulate
- Reach out to family, friends, or NEDIC (<https://nedic.ca/contact>) for support
- Remind yourself: you're not alone and you deserve care that respects your neurodivergence!



For information, support, resources, and referrals, chat with us online at nedic.ca or toll-free 1-866-NEDIC-20 (416-340-4156 GTA).