



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FOR SEVERE EATING DISORDERS & MALNUTRITION

An often-overlooked aspect of eating disorders and severe malnutrition is how they can **disrupt routines**. Whether a patient is suffering from an eating disorder or malnutrition caused by another condition, medical conditions can become the focus of their life. **Patients may have difficulty with everyday tasks** like showering, doing laundry, running errands, taking care of children or pets and enjoying their favorite pastimes. Often, decreased ability to participate in daily life motivates patients to seek treatment.



WHY IS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IMPORTANT?

- **SUPPORTS RECOVERY**
For patients with eating disorders, routines related to food, self-care, caring for family members, sleep, work and school can become disrupted. Occupational therapists can help create balanced, sustainable daily routines that support recovery.
- **PROMOTES INDEPENDENCE**
Occupational therapy helps patients regain, adapt and/or develop the skills necessary for daily activities. Occupational therapists at ACUTE collaborate with patients to identify their treatment goals and support them in leading fulfilling, meaningful lives.
- **IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE**
When someone is critically ill, other parts of life can fall to the wayside. Occupational therapists help patients focus on their individual goals and adapt the environment to restore a sense of purpose and independence, improving their quality of life.



HELPING PATIENTS FROM ADMISSION TO DISCHARGE

ASSESSMENT

Upon admission, the patient meets with a dedicated occupational therapist. The initial evaluation addresses the activities that were becoming more difficult in their daily routine, along with establishing the patient's treatment goals. Over time, occupational therapists build rapport with patients, and goals are revisited throughout the length of stay as new challenges emerge or priorities shift. Occupational therapists may also utilize standard assessments to guide care.

EDUCATION

Education on the benefits of stress management, yoga¹, pelvic floor therapy² and activity modifications to reduce risk of injury in daily activities can improve treatment for patients with eating disorders and malnutrition by providing them with a better understanding of how their bodies work while also fostering a mind-body connection.

SKILLED INTERVENTIONS

Our occupational therapists tailor each session to the patient's unique challenges. ACUTE's occupational therapists will utilize a variety of activities to help build or regain skills:

- Activities of daily living training
- Rebuilding or progressing activity tolerance
- Coping skills and stress management
- Pelvic floor therapy
- Skill-building groups
- Sensory processing modalities
- Yoga

¹Hall, A., Ofei-Tenkorang, N. A., Machan, J. T., & Gordon, C. M. (2016). Use of yoga in outpatient eating disorder treatment: a pilot study. *Journal of Eating Disorders*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40337-016-0130-2>. ²Williams, M., Blalock, D., Foster, M., Mehler, P. S., & Gibson, D. (2024). Pelvic Floor Dysfunction in People with Eating Disorders and the Acute Effect of Different Interventions – A Retrospective Cohort Study. *Clinical and Experimental Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 51(5). <https://doi.org/10.31083/j.ceog5105116>

When patients are critically ill, expertise becomes crucial. The ACUTE Center for Eating Disorders & Severe Malnutrition treats the highest number of patients with severe eating disorders and malnutrition.

ACUTE accepts patients 15 years and older of all gender expressions with a BMI <14.5 or those experiencing severe medical complications from an eating disorder or severe malnutrition. View our full admission criteria [here](#).

Call 877-228-8348 to speak with
a member of the acute admissions team.



ACUTE
CENTER FOR EATING DISORDERS
& SEVERE MALNUTRITION
BY DENVER HEALTH
A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE