

Information on Re feeding Syndrome

For restoring regular eating

Name	Date
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Clinicians Name



Why do we assess for refeeding syndrome?

Useful Contact Numbers

Connect Eating Disorders Team Secretary	0141 277 7407
Connect Eating Disorders Dietitian	0141 277 7502
North CAMHS	0141 232 0418
South CAMHS	0141 300 6300
East CAMHS	0141 277 7522
West CAMHS	0141 207 7100
East Renfrewshire CAMHS	0141 800 7886
West Dunbartonshire CAMHS	01389 817376
Renfrewshire CAMHS	0141 314 8981
Inverclyde CAMHS	01475 504447
NHS 24	111

You have been assessed as at some risk of refeeding syndrome, this is due to your body having been starved. You have exhausted your body stores and have been breaking down essential skeletal muscle. This puts your body under great stress, so care has to be taken to re-introduce food slowly whilst your blood is monitored to make sure it is coping with this food re introduction. It is important that you include foods rich in the essential nutrients that your body needs to help prevent re feeding syndrome and therefore enable your body to metabolise your food safely. These essential nutrients or electrolytes will be regularly checked in your blood during this process. Eating foods rich in these nutrients is important, see below:

- **Phosphate.** It is essential for metabolism and energy production and in keeping muscles working, especially the heart muscle. Milk and foods made from milk, like yogurt, custard and cheese are high in phosphate. (Note: some brands of soya milk are low in phosphate, so it is not a suitable substitute).
- **Potassium.** Blood potassium may be low if you have not been eating well. Like phosphate, it is essential for nerve and muscle function as well as metabolism. Fruit, fruit juice and vegetables are high in potassium.
- **Magnesium** is essential for muscle and nerves- and are found in cereals and green vegetables
- **Calcium.** Calcium has a role in metabolic functioning as well as in protecting and strengthening your bones. Milk and foods made from milk, like yogurt, custard, and cheese, are high in calcium.
- **Fluid.** Every cell in your body needs water to work properly, so being dehydrated can make you quite unwell.

You may be given a meal plan which includes milk based food, fruit juice and fluid to make sure you get the essential elements in your diet.

A refeeding meal plan ensures having regular small meals and snacks, so you do not have to eat too much at one time. The foods are easy to eat and digest, to help make sure eating them is not too tiring or stressful. It is a good idea to reduce the fibre content of your foods currently as added bulk will increase portion sizes and potential discomfort.

What will happen when you follow a refeeding meal plan?

It is essential that you follow the plan. During this period changes in your weight will only be shifts in body fluid, as your body restores a healthy fluid balance. You will not yet be making any improvements in your actual non fluid body composition. The aim of this plan is to help physically stabilise your body along with any medical treatment that may be advised.

You will also need a vitamin and mineral supplement which your dietitian can ask your GP to prescribe.

What are the next stages?

Once you have been following the plan and your blood results are normal, you will be assessed as no longer at risk of refeeding syndrome, so you will be able to go on with treatment and start to eat enough to give your body the nutrition it desperately needs, then you will start to feel warmer, and have more energy and to re-build new healthy body tissues.

Signs and Symptoms of refeeding syndrome.

- **Biochemical/Bloods**
- The most common and dangerous is a fall in your blood phosphate level which can affect your heart causing arrhythmias. Other potential blood derangements include low potassium, sodium, magnesium, calcium and glucose levels but these will all be checked when you have a blood test. You will also be started on a multivitamin supplement.
- **Cardiac**
- When your bloods are deranged this can also result in cardiac impairment, including heart failure, heart arrhythmias, low heart rate, and oedema (water retention). Your pulse and blood pressure will be taken and an ECG will be ordered to detect any abnormalities.
- **Neurological**
- You may suffer increased confusion, irritability and muscle weakness. Blood tests will show up any potential biochemical derangements and a neurological examination will also be done.
- **Infections**
- As a result of metabolic and biochemical derangement, you are at increased risk of infections. Infection markers such as white cell count will also be checked in your blood tests.
- **Skin and Mouth**
- You are more susceptible to skin issues including pressure sore areas, mouth ulcers, dental caries and enamel erosion. Any mouth issues are made worse by a poor fluid intake.

Warning Signs and Symptoms of re-feeding syndrome to look out for?

- Generalised weakness
- Fits, seizures or tremors
- Low blood pressure or fainting
- Confusion
- Abdominal pain
- Breathing difficulties
- Swelling of hands and feet

What to do if you are concerned a young person may be suffering with these key signs and symptoms of starvation:

- Contact your local CAMHS team. If your case holder is unavailable you will be transferred to the duty worker who will arrange for a psychiatrist to assess you.
- If it is out of hours you can contact nhs 24 for advice or visit A&E directly.