

# Family Education Sheet

## Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) Overview



Boston Children's Hospital  
Until every child is well™

Patient and Family Education  
[www.childrenshospital.org](http://www.childrenshospital.org)

### What is ARFID\*?

- Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) is a disturbance in the way someone eats.
- Children with ARFID limit the amount and/or types of foods they will eat.
- Children with ARFID do not eat enough calories to grow properly.

### How can you tell if my child has ARFID\*?

If your child has ARFID, it means they have one or more of the following:

- They have a major weight loss (or are not gaining weight/growing as expected)
- They are not getting enough nutrients
- They need enteral (tube) feeding or nutritional supplements
- They are not interested in the social aspects of eating

**And it means that their challenges with eating are *not*:**

- Because they do not have access to food or because of cultural beliefs
- Related to concerns about their weight or their body shape
- Fully explained by any medical condition or another mental disorder

### Who is likely to have ARFID\*?

- Children on the autism spectrum or who have attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and/or intellectual disabilities are much more likely to have ARFID.
- Children who do not outgrow normal childhood picky eating appear to be more likely to have ARFID.
- Many children with ARFID also have an anxiety disorder.

### How can I learn more about ARFID?

- National Eating Disorders Association - What exactly is ARFID?  
<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/blog/what-exactly-arfid>
- National Eating Disorders Association – It's time to talk about ARFID  
<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/blog/time-to-talk-about-arfid>

*\*Source: American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.*

*This Family Education Sheet is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses and treatment, talk with your health care provider.*