

Risk Factors in PWS - Children

Risk factors which result directly from the eating disorder include:

- Children with PWS may be easily bribed by offers of food, or they may ask strangers for money or food.
- Indiscriminate eating of items such as frozen food, food from rubbish bins and off the ground, berries etc.
- Eating non-food items (*pica*) may also occur in some individuals. Known examples include soap, toothpaste, and ointments, especially those which are food-scented.
- Over-eating can cause morbid obesity, even in young children.
- Possibility of asphyxia, due to choking on food or regurgitation.

Other risk factors unrelated to food

- Inability to recognise internal injury or disease because of high pain threshold is potentially life-threatening.
- Bruising may appear for which the child is unable to account, because of their high pain threshold and/or easy bruising body composition. Carers should be aware that this could be accidental or non-accidental.
- Lack of vomiting – may be ill even where sickness is not occurring.
- Risk of injury to self and others resulting from temper outbursts.
- Inability to distinguish between hot and cold temperatures (eg scalding or too cold baths, hypothermia in cold weather).
- A tendency to "daydream" can make an individual with PWS unaware of their immediate surroundings. Thus they may be slow to take action if, for example, a car is speeding towards them. Many children have little road sense.
- Difficulties in spatial awareness, general clumsiness.
- More likely to trip or fall due to poor balance and coordination.
- A poorly developed sense of danger or disgust.
- Underdeveloped social skills and immature emotional development can lead to misunderstanding and isolation from peer group.

Further information

Healthcare

Medical alert – available in several languages