

**Alert to Law Enforcement Personnel
Regarding Person with Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS)**

This person has Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS). PWS is a genetic disorder that impairs brain function. The brain of a person with PWS sends a message of constant hunger due to an inability to register a feeling of “fullness” after eating regardless of the amount of food ingested. Therefore, sneaking or taking food is common. People with PWS may also take nonfood items (i.e. money) usually in an attempt to buy or trade for food. Over consumption of food can be life threatening for a person with PWS.

The same part of the brain that regulates appetite also regulates emotional response. As a result, it is not uncommon for a person with PWS to experience significant behavioral outbursts. These outbursts can involve aggressive behavior, calling 911 when upset, destroying property, and “running away” for no apparent reason.

All of these behaviors, while actively discouraged by parents and caregivers, should be treated as a manifestation of the person’s disability rather than a criminal act. Appropriate responses include working with parents and/or caregivers to develop positive behavioral solutions in each situation to discourage repeat incidents in the future. Thank you for your understanding and support.



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