



When healthy nutrition is detrimental for your health!

www.diatrofologos.com protects you.

Could it be that ...

1. you spend more than 3 hours per day thinking or talking about healthy nutrition?
2. you find yourself organizing with preciseness the meals and snacks that you are to eat in the next 3 - 4 days?
3. you regard the nature of the foods as being more important than their taste?
4. you have become adamant in nutrition topics lately?
5. you feel like your self-esteem is toned up when you follow a healthy diet?
6. you admit that the quality of your meals has improved while the quality of your life has deteriorated?
7. you have stopped eating your favorite foods because you know they are unhealthy?
8. the nutrition habits you are following are not permitting you to enjoy food in restaurants or at friends' houses and it becomes a matter of argument with other family members?
9. you feel guilty when you eat something unhealthy?
10. the compliance with healthy nutrition standards provides inner peace and you feel that you have total control of your life?

According to Dr. Steven Bratman, who invented the term in 1997 in Colorado, if you have answer "yes" to 5 - 6 of the above questions, then the term "orthorexic" suits you and you should get advice from a health expert about your habits.

A new nutritional disorder:

Orthorexia is the pathological persistence in consuming ONLY healthy foods. It appears innocent, like a wish, from people to improve their health and to prevent serious health risks. They adopt a balanced diet, with special consideration on quality and obvious preferences in specific products (eg. fruits and vegetables) with a parallel avoidance of other products (eg. processed snacks). At the same time, these people start worrying about the nature of the foods they consume. Along the way, however, in order to get rid

of unhealthy habits, they start incorporating the feeling of superiority against others who do not comply with healthy nutrition standards. As time goes by, the quality and quantity of the foods they consume, as well as the health benefits, become a source of psychosis.

Contrary to the other health disorders, like bulimia and anorexia, orthorexia does not have any hidden dangers in health, since the orthorexic person refuses to eat unhealthily and will not lose control with the quantity of food consumed. However, this psychological pressure is so intense, that it may lead to depression.

When do we go overboard?

When does a healthy habit get converted into a problem or psychological disorder? When a person surpasses the limits and allows a preference or habit to take the steering wheel of his / her life, and its accomplishment consumes most of the person's mental and bodily activities, then this habit has become an obsession. It's absolutely legitimate to try to eat healthily. It's unhealthy however, to let nutrition diminish the quality of our lives. When our nutritional habits threaten our family balance, our social dealings and they lead our lives, then ... we have surpassed the limits.

The psychological profil of orthorexics:

This nutritional disorder makes no distinctions. It affects both men and women equally. As a general rule however, it has to do with people who are in absolute need to feel that they have control over their lives. The short term satisfaction they get from "hunting" for the perfect food, soon vanishes and anxiety takes over as to what the next choice should be and whether it will be a healthy one.

The period of guilt and the self-tormenting make up of the most part of a person's mental life. The person gets into a "proper" treasure hunt in an attempt to be the winner in the race against himself. If self-punishment is also present, then the imposing of "correctness" is more intense. The person keeps a diary of what he / she consumes, where the food is coming from, and follows the "healthy guidelines" that he / she has set with absolutely no deviation. The level of difficulty of these rules is constantly increasing. It's like a game where the rules become harder and harder the longer you play.

The lack of security in the quality of the foods reflects a more general lack of security toward life. These people are basically hypochondriacs, they are greatly pre-occupied with their health and they are constantly looking for symptoms of disease. Usually they suffer from psychosomatic diseases and they are tortured with the risk of what could happen. Thus they are totally aware of what they eat to prevent any unwanted health risks. They also feel like they are the victims of circumstances, they feel valnerable and prone to external dangers.

Thus a vicious cicle is created. Stress interferes with the person's life and is displayed

in controlling food intake and thus the person's self. The orthorexic's social and private life causes stress as well. Thus everything out of the person's control is a cause for stress.

When healthy nutrition turns into a nightmare:

Thus, as we scream and shout about healthy eating, there is the danger that this love and devotion toward health be converted into an emotional nightmare. And even though orthorexia is not an official medical term, many doctors believe that it explains an important and growing health phenomenon. Therapy for this disorder is based on the detachment from the psychosis and the incorporation of healthy eating in a person's life within normal and logical limits.

Food should remain as a pleasant experience that nurtures us, and not something that imposes stress and a dogma of discipline which is made up of rules that include 100% raw foods, fresh and organic fruits and vegetables etc.

So, what do we do? www.diatrofologos.com suggests:

- Don't let food rule your life.
- Look at nutrition as a health tool.
- Eat healthy meals without persistence.
- Do not let your eating habits take over your personal value as a human being.
- Do not convert eating into a religion of any sort.

Should you have any specific questions or concerns, feel free to contact us at youcandoit@diatrofologos.com and we will address them in future newsletters.

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