

Food Addiction Examined

By Jim Rachels



Food addiction is a real disease with real life threatening symptoms should they not be addressed earlier in life. You get the same type of high that you would get from any other drug or alcohol. Some believe that either food addiction is not real or that it is not as life threatening as other addictions, but it is.

I would like to say that I am an emotional eater, a compulsive eater, and a binge eater. I've been bulimic and I've been anorexic. I have suffered from an eating disorder of some sort since I was about eight years old. I still remember how and why it started. At that time I was not eating lunch at school. My dad would only make me bologna and I didn't like it. But he never changed it for me and I would not eat all day because I wouldn't eat it at lunch. I would then get home and be so hungry that I would grab an entire sleeve of Chips Ahoy and eat it all by myself.

It should also be stated that around this time was when my mother and father had just told us they were getting divorced and my mom moved out. Not only was I eating because I was hungry, I now look back and think that was the first time I was emotionally eating to try to just make myself feel better than I was at the time. It was a hard time in my life and food gave me comfort. This is something that became a crutch for me to lean on in times of stress, sadness, and anger till this day.

I still remember how fast I was able to eat those. It was so quick that before I knew it I was on the last cookie. To this day this is something I still battle with. I seem to have terrible portion control. I tend to eat everything in front of me and everything I have. I don't eat until I'm just filled, I overeat until I can't eat anymore. Or sometimes I just stop eating in order to lose weight quickly. It should be noted I've never had the same weight for long periods of time. I seem to always be gaining or losing weight. To maintain that weight is extremely difficult.

The one thing that makes this addiction different from all others is this is the only addiction that you have to do every day. Even though you have an addiction disorder you still need to use your substance of choice. You can't just abstain from eating. It is something that you will be doing every day for the rest of your life. No matter which way you slice the pie every day you have to eat to sustain life. This makes it incredibly difficult.

Food addiction has been something that hasn't been studied all too much in the past. But recently the research done in this area is increasing and starting to spread more awareness of this issue.

Just like any other drug, food can activate the reward system in our brain. This is one of the reasons people will overeat. We look for that pleasure that comes along with the release of dopamine that happens when we eat. This then makes us chase that feeling more and more. It should also be

noted that this problem is not only found in obese people. There are people who are able to process extra calories differently and not gain weight but they still might be overeating or eating emotionally.

This can start quite early in a child's life. No matter what the age of your child you should still be on the lookout for warning signs of all types of things including their weight.