

ORTHOREXIA



Anorexia, bulimia and binge eating are well-known eating disorders. With the recent upsurge in interest in health and nutrition a new eating disorder is now making an appearance - Orthorexia.

Orthorexia is an obsession with eating healthy foods, which at first doesn't sound like a bad thing because eating healthy foods is good for us.

However orthorexia sufferers become so preoccupied with eating healthy food that the psychological impact can be overwhelming. Having a compelling obsession with eating only "clean" or "pure" foods and a phobia of anything considered "bad" hugely restricts the types of foods eaten and impacts both physical and psychological health.

Orthorexia is spurred on by praise and admiration from peers on a person's commitment to eating healthy. When your moral value begins to depend on how healthy you eat and therefore how restrictive you become it leads to psychological trauma, stress, guilt and shame at every meal of every day.

Orthorexia quickly begins to affect quality of life. Sufferers may become uncomfortable socialising with friends as the idea of not knowing how the food is prepared causes major stress. Those with orthorexia begin to spend more and more time eating alone which has a devastating psychological impact.

There can be a very fine line between making an effort to eat healthy and orthorexia. Calorie counting apps like My Fitness Pal have a place in learning about the calorie and nutrient content of food but be careful not to let the obsession take over!

No food should be restricted from your diet; eat foods that make your body feel good which comes with time and experimenting.

Living a balanced lifestyle is crucial for your mental health and this is heavily influenced by the foods you eat. So eat a chocolate biscuit for your good health today!