

Food Addiction Program for Food Addicts of All Ages – It's Never Too Late

Young or old, many food addicts think it's too late for them to get help. However, forty percent of Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous members have been abstinent for four years or longer regardless of what age they entered the program.

According to Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous (FA) member Ethel, entering the FA program at an older age in a wheelchair and with severe health consequences was not easy. Today, she leads a fulfilling life without abusing food, free of diabetes and other food-related medical problems.

"I am a 75-year-old Afro-American female who joined FA at a later age. Before FA I was morbidly obese which caused many health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure and limited mobility requiring me to use a wheelchair. When I came into FA in 2006 I weighed 321 pounds at the time. Since being in FA I have lost 180-plus pounds with no need for the wheelchair or meds for diabetes or blood pressure. I walk to my meetings and stand as a healthy and grateful septuagenarian."

Founded in 1998, FA is an effective, long-term solution to food addiction for many people who use food as a drug. As is the case with other addictions, food addiction involves physical craving and an ever-increasing dependence upon and struggle with a substance (food). The manifestations of food addiction vary. Overeating, under-eating or self-starvation, bulimia (including exercise bulimia), and extreme obsession with weight or food are among the symptoms of this addiction.

Men in the program share recovery from these symptoms: "Before learning about FA, my weight was 314 pounds and climbing (yet again). As a Spanish-American male in my early thirties, six years before joining FA, my top weight was 341 (I know I was heavier than that, but I would not get on a scale). I had a laundry list of health problems.

Besides being morbidly obese, I had plantar fasciitis in both feet, a bad right knee and lower back, heart palpitations, acid reflux, undiagnosed sleep apnea, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, I suffered from anxiety and panic attacks, bouts of vertigo, depression, fear, doubt and insecurity. Since coming to FA, getting a sponsor and utilizing the tools of the program, the weight came off my body. I now weigh 165 and have maintained this weight for more than five years. I do not suffer from any of those physical (or mental) ailments any longer. FA has given me a sense of peace, and I know fundamentally all is well as long as I am not eating addictively."

Before joining the FA program, many adult and teen members were overweight, some by as much as 250 pounds. Others were dangerously underweight or controlled their eating to the point of obsession through under-eating, bulimia, laxatives or over-exercising. For example, now in recovery, Katie is able to live her life free from the

destructive cycle of bulimia.

“I’m a 40-year-old recovering bulimic, under-eater and compulsive liar. I started bingeing and purging when I was 14 years old. I thought this was the answer to all my prayers as I quickly took off the extra 20 pounds I couldn’t seem to release by ‘normal’ eating. I’m 5’ 7”, and, at one point through my use of purging and using laxatives, I weighed only 108. I mixed all of this with almost daily drinking, smoking and intermittent drug use. I would use anything I could get my hands on that would take me out of reality and help me feel more secure about myself. Through all of this I stopped menstruating, nearly ruined my teeth, and nearly destroyed some of my relationships because of my incessant lying.

After being in recovery for just over 11 years I’ve maintained a healthy weight and I no longer use anything to ‘control’ my weight. Thankfully my body has fully recovered, and I was able to conceive and have two beautiful sons. I can’t believe how my life has changed. One year before FA, I recall having fun at a party I went to. Then, something happened, and I found myself at the buffet table eating all the goodies. That night I felt so disgusted that I hitched a cab and had the driver take me to my office building so I could go throw up where no one was around. I am forever grateful to the FA program for giving me my health and life back! ”

Derrick, 33, experienced the first symptoms of his food addiction in high school which then carried over into college in the form of compulsive exercising. Derrick remembers, “I was thin, but I was miserably obsessed with food. I found that being thin did not mean being well. I exercised constantly and had no peace until I found FA. At first I was one of the few guys, but there are more and more men coming into FA.”

Younger members have also experienced success in FA. Cassie, who started the program at age 14 recalls, “At first it was tough balancing school and FA meetings, but I had to put my recovery first. I watched my grades go way up and can now concentrate on what I’m studying, instead of obsessing about what I’m going to eat.” As a result, Cassie, now in her twenties, is in a graduate program in an area where she participates in the FA program long-distance.

The FA membership of 4,000 members spans 40 states in the U.S. and countries including Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Kenya, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. In the United States alone, there are more than 418 weekly FA meetings available for those looking for freedom from food addiction. Many members follow the program with the help of a long-distance sponsor, as there are not yet meetings in their towns and cities.

For more information about FA, visit www.foodaddicts.org, or call the FA World Service Office at (781) 932-6300.

Article provided by Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous

The 20 Questions

Are You a Food Addict?

Ask yourself the following questions and answer them as honestly as you can.

1. Have you ever wanted to stop eating and found you just couldn't?
2. Do you think about food or your weight constantly?
3. Do you find yourself attempting one diet or food plan after another, with no lasting success?
4. Do you binge and then "get rid of the binge" through vomiting, exercise, laxatives or other forms of purging?
5. Do you eat differently in private than you do in front of other people?
6. Has a doctor or family member ever approached you with concern about your eating habits or weight?
7. Do you eat large quantities of food at one time (binge)?
8. Is your weight problem due to your "nibbling" all day long?
9. Do you eat to escape from your feelings?
10. Do you eat when you're not hungry?
11. Have you ever discarded food, only to retrieve and eat it later?
12. Do you eat in secret?
13. Do you fast or severely restrict your food intake?
14. Have you ever stolen other people's food?
15. Have you ever hidden food to make sure you have "enough?"
16. Do you feel driven to exercise excessively to control your weight?
17. Do you obsessively calculate the calories you've burned against the calories you've eaten?
18. Do you frequently feel guilty or ashamed about what you've eaten?
19. Are you waiting for your life to begin "when you lose the weight?"
20. Do you feel hopeless about your relationship with food?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, then you may be a food addict. You are not alone. FA offers hope through a real solution to food addiction.

About FA:

Based on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), FA is an international fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience and mutual support, are recovering from food addiction. FA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine. Membership in FA is free and is open to anyone who wants to recover from food addiction. The group is composed of women and men diverse in age, ethnicity and socio-economic background who experienced difficulty controlling the way they ate.

[Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous](#) meets locally at: <PLACE, DAY, TIME>
Contact <NAME, PHONE NUMBER> for more information.