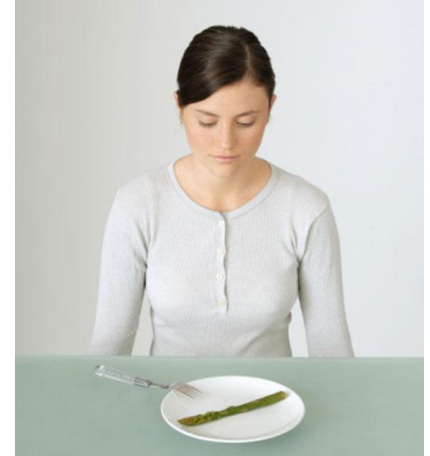
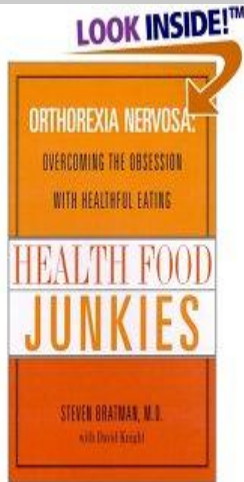


**Orthorexia-Health Food Junkies**  
*Adapted from Health Food Junkies by Steven Bratman*

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It has been often said that a state of well-being requires balance in life or moderation in all things. Add another complication to eating smart with a condition called *orthorexia nervosa* or literally “fixation on righteous eating”. The word orthorexia was coined in 1997 by Colorado alternative medicine specialist Steven Bratman. Of course, it’s great to eat healthy food, and most of us could benefit by paying a little more attention to what we eat. However, some people have the opposite problem: they take the concept of healthy eating to such an extreme that it becomes an obsession. It can go beyond the healthfood junkie stage to becoming a life threatening eating disorder. The obsession that the out-of-control healthy eater feels can become a sense of spirituality. Bratman says, "You're doing a good, virtuous thing. You also feel that because it's difficult to do, it must be virtuous. The more extreme you are, the more virtuous you feel."

**Questions to Consider:**

- Do you wish that occasionally you could just eat, and not think about whether it’s good for you?
- Has your diet made you socially isolated?
- Is it impossible to imagine going through a whole day without paying attention to your diet, and just living?
- Are you constantly controlling what you eat? Even to the point that you will not eat out because you might be tempted to eat something ‘bad’?
- Do you have trouble remembering that love, and joy, and play and creativity are more important than food?
- Have you gotten your weight so low that people think you may have anorexia?

If you recognize yourself in the majority of these questions, you might have orthorexia. The good news is that the condition is treatable, and involves loosening the grip food has over your life. Steven Bratman states, "I begin by agreeing that the diet is important, but also saying, 'Isn't it also important in life to have some spontaneity, some enjoyment?'" Orthorexians must go down the tricky road of rediscovering joy in living and interacting socially in situations that involve food. Support groups available :

<http://eatingdisordersonline.com/explain/orthorexia.php>