

IN THIS ISSUE ♦ Food Addiction's rich history ♦ The toxic food environment ♦ Act now to tell the WHO about Food Addiction ♦
IN EVERY ISSUE ♦ Research Bites ♦ Our Social Menu ♦ The Latest in Food Addiction ♦ Events in Food Addiction

FOODADDICTIONINSTITUTE.ORG

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DIGEST

OF THE FOOD ADDICTION INSTITUTE

THE LONG & RICH HISTORY OF FOOD ADDICTION

70 Years of Scientific Research, Academic Certifications,
Treatment Advances, Scholarly Articles, Popular Books, and More

1956

♦ Theron Rudolph (pictured) publishes the first mention of Food Addiction in academic literature in [The descriptive features of Food Addiction](#) addictive eating and drinking in the Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol.



1960

♦ [Overeaters Anonymous](#) is founded by Rozanne S.
♦ In an episode of his decades-long fitness show on American television, Jack LaLanne (pictured) [compares sugar abuse to alcoholism](#), and shares how he abstains from it.



Food Addiction's history

The institute's chief goal is recognition of Food Addiction in all its fullness, not only in diagnostic manuals but in public perception. Even though we've gained impressive ground, pockets of skepticism remain where they maintain that Food Addiction doesn't even exist.

One way we respond to that is with the newest addition to our website, [a history of Food Addiction](#). Did you know that the first mention of Food Addiction in scientific literature was by Theron Rudolph in 1956? That's about 70 years of "doesn't even exist."

The page is the longest on our site, and with good reason. More than 75 people are cited, and there'd be many more if we cited each author on each book or study, every time. About two dozen institutions are cited as well.

Research into the history was undertaken originally by the institute's founder, Phil Werdell, but has been extended to the present day. Even so, we can't claim it is encyclopedic, and if you want to suggest an addition, please be in touch.

In the meantime, the next time someone scoffs, please consider using this feature in your reply.

Do "all foods fit" in a toxic food environment?

It's not hard to see how "all foods fit" arose as a bedrock tenet in eating disorder circles. Generations of dieters were told to do without foods that others could eat with impunity, and it was gallingly unfair. These dieters worked hard to reduce their body size but often failed, until they decided that if they weren't going to benefit from their efforts, they weren't going to be denied any longer.

But the maxim of "all foods fit" is running up against a tidal wave of agreement that ultra-processed foods are responsible for a substantial portion of the world's overweight condition, and by extension, chronic health conditions and early mortality, undeniably related to the condition.

Let's agree on one thing: A lot of processed foods taste really good. And they ought to, considering that consumer food products have been engineered for decades to hit every sweet spot —and sour, and fatty, and salty — known to mankind.

The facts are pretty clear: Individuals vary, of course, but people need roughly 2,000 calories a day for sustenance. Worldwide, food production in 2021 resulted in almost 3,000 calories per person per day. In the US, the accepted figure is 3,900 calories per person per day. It's true that these figures do not account for food waste, which is substantial, but still, any food company seeking to make a profit depends on selling more calories than people need.

If you were a multinational food producer — did you know that the 10 largest food conglomerates make 70 percent of the food consumed in the world? — how would you accomplish this? By engineering the best darn-tasting food possible, of course! And they seem to be good at it, considering that according to the World Health Organization, 1 in every 8 people on Earth in 2022 was obese. Since 1990, the rate of adult obesity had doubled, and the rate of adolescent obesity had quadrupled. (Obesity is a common symptom of Food Addiction, but to be clear: Not all obese people are Food Addicts, and not all Food Addicts are obese.)

It has to be said: Every person has the right to eat as they wish, and the right to be overweight, if it comes to that. That's body positivity! But taken in the aggregate, obesity is a grave public-health problem. People who experience obesity, on average, die earlier and experience worse health while alive.

To many, this has raised “all foods fit” from rallying cry to public-health malpractice.

Help create a Food Addiction diagnosis!

For a limited time, the World Health Organization is seeking comments — your comments! — on a proposal to create a food-related substance-use disorder.

This is vital for those with Food Addiction. Not only would it lead to insurance-supported treatment, something not now available, but it would require healthcare professionals — many of whom don't screen for, or even think about Food Addiction — to educate themselves on this new diagnosis.

It is rare for an opportunity for people like us to influence such a process. And, the window for this opportunity will close. Please act today.

TELL THE WHO ABOUT YOUR FOOD ADDICTION

We are Food Addiction Informed:

What do we mean when we talk about Food Addiction?

We start with these three tenets:

1. Food Addiction is a disease.
2. Abstinence from binge and trigger foods and behaviors is essential for recovery.
3. An action plan that includes substantial support is highly recommended.



The Latest in Food Addiction

Food Junkies podcasts

[Dr. Erica Lafata](#): Diagnosing Ultra-Processed Food Addiction with FASI

[Dr. Nasha Winters](#): Cancer, UPFs, and Metabolic Healing.

[Dr. Nicole Avena](#): Challenging the Naysayers

Video interviews by the institute's Cynthia Myers-Morrison

[Abstinence vs. Harm Reduction](#), featuring Dr. Vera Tarman.

[Is Food Addictive? Hunger, Ultra-Processed Foods & Mental Health](#), featuring Dr. Georgia Ede.

[The Neuroscience of Food Addiction](#), featuring Dr. Claire Wilcox.

[How Obesity Medicine is Changing: Food Addiction as the Missing Link](#), featuring Dr. Angie Ausban.

Blog post

[My Do-Nothing Bench](#), submitted by Lisa K., a member of SHiFT's community.

Events in Food Addiction

[Virtual SHiFT Intensive](#)

Jan. 16-23. An 8 day, online instructor-led program where attendees are introduced to the concepts and tools needed for recovery. Sign up now to get started.

[Wednesdays with Theresa \(recurring\)](#)

Dietitian Theresa Wright hosts clients, former clients, and others. 7-8:30 p.m. Eastern US (GMT+5).

[Constructive living workshop \(recurring\)](#)

Dr. Marty Lerner and others from Milestones in Recovery host a 60-minute weekly workshop for Milestones alumni and interested others. Mondays, 6:30 p.m. Eastern (GMT+5)

[SHiFT Strong Calls \(recurring\)](#)

Monday 8-9 am, Wednesday 8-9 pm, Saturday 11:30-12:30, Sunday 7-8. All times Eastern US [GMT+5]

[Mindful Meditation Classes](#)

offered for free by SHiFT. Dec. 4, 11, 18. 3-3:45 p.m. Eastern (GMT+5)

Research Bites

From the types of treatment available to getting an official diagnosis recognized, science is exploring Food Addiction ever more frequently and broadly. Some recent dispatches from the front line:

- * The [International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction](#) recently shared a review of 48 empirical studies by Hascher, Ossmy, and Pontes with a call to do further research into effective treatments for Food Addiction as a substance use disorder.
- * A provisionally accepted article by Cuaranta in [Frontiers in Psychiatry](#) discusses the Time-Restricted Eating approach and a reduction in UPFs as part of chrononutrition to improve mental health, Food Addiction, and circadian rhythms.
- * A cross-sectional study of university students in the United Arab Emirates found that Food Addiction was more common among obese students and those with higher stress levels. The [Journal of Eating Disorders](#) has the study, "Prevalence and Correlates of Food Addiction among University Students in the United Arab Emirates: The Role of Stress and Body Mass Index" under review.
- * A health report by [Polsky et al.](#) reviewed data from Canadian residents aged 2 and up as part of a 24-hour dietary recall and found that when meals were taken at home, fewer calories were gained from UPFs. However, those who ate in restaurants almost doubled the amount of calories gained from UPFs as compared to minimally processed foods. This was even higher for children and adolescents.
- * [Loch et al](#) published Ultra-processed food addiction in a nationally representative sample of older adults in the USA in late September. The sample of older adults aged 50 to 80 found that the prevalence of UPFA was higher among women overall, but certain criteria, such as being overweight, physical health, and social isolation, had varying effects on the likelihood of meeting UPFA criteria.
- * [Krause](#), as part of a dissertation, examines the use of MIP (Mastering Inner Parts) within IFS (Internal Family Systems) to treat women with Food Addiction.



On Our Social Menu

Hello, December!

This month, we're focusing on gifts that don't come in boxes — gifts that begin with caring for ourselves and ripple outward to those we love.

When someone seeks help for Food Addiction...

When someone learns the science behind their struggle...

When someone chooses recovery, one day at a time...

They are giving a powerful gift — not only to themselves but also to everyone around them.

Recovery strengthens families.
Recovery builds healthier futures.
Recovery changes generations.

Throughout December, we'll explore what it means to give ourselves the gift of healing — and how that gift naturally spreads hope, peace, and possibility to others.

Here's to a month of honoring the gifts that truly matter:
Recovery. Connection. Awareness. Compassion.
For ourselves — and for the world.

Look for articles to support your Food Addiction recovery journey

Exploring Food Addiction: Psychology, Self-Control, and Eating
Why Ultra-Processed Foods Trigger Addiction
How Early Sugar Exposure Shapes Heart Health

Share Your Experience

Be a Part of Our Recovery Community

If you're interested in sharing your Food Addiction recovery journey in an interview, please contact us at info@foodaddictioninstitute.org

Another option is a three-minute share about one of the following prompts:

- * How my life changed when I accepted I was a Food Addict
- * What life was like, and then what happened
- * The most surprising thing I learned about myself as a result ...

We want the people who come and watch to be more convinced than before that Food Addiction is real and that life can get better in recovery.

Please contact us at info@foodaddictioninstitute.org. Your story could provide hope for others on their recovery journey.

If you're interested in joining our social media committee, we'd love to hear from you. Our committee is always looking for passionate individuals who want to make a difference in the lives of those struggling with Food Addiction.

Please know that we appreciate your donations — large and small. [Donate.](#)

Take the Next Step Toward Your Transformation in Food Addiction Recovery

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