

## **Bring the Apple Back To School**

On May 20, 2002, the New York Times, front-page headlines: "In Bid to Improve Nutrition, Schools Expel Soda and Chips". The article talks about the Obesity Prevention and Treatment Act, taken up by Congress that week, that would start a campaign to improve the eating habits in the nation. It goes on to say:

The two biggest states, Texas and California are moving to phasing out junk food in schools, as are many school districts in other states.

The food industry and its lobbyists have started fighting back, running radio advertisements that criticize "food Nags" as trying to take away choice. Sloth not junk food is behind the threefold increase in the number of overweight children in the last 30 years, say spokesmen for some of the biggest food and soft drink companies.

John Doyle, a spokesman for the Center for Consumer Freedom, the food industry group leading the fight against the lawsuits and the bans on junk food, states: "you can not mandate fat away". That may be true but it provides a platform for this urgent and critical topic to be discussed and acted upon.

Talk about choice? By the mere definition of the word, in order to make a choice, you need at least two options. And to make a conscientious choice you should have full disclosure and complete information as to the consequences of those options. If you have little or no information about the potential dangers of the wrong choice what good would the choice be? Sometimes, we as a society don't always make the right choice. In order to protect the rights of free enterprise we very often make serious compromises.

Before we continue to make bad choices in order to serve the few at the cost of the many children who do not yet know the consequences of their actions; let's look at just a few of the facts the junk food pushers don't want you to know.

In 1970, intake of refined sweeteners equaled approximately 24 pounds per capita per year in the US. Today's average equals 158 pounds per capita per year. Average annual consumption of soda equals 54 gallons per person. A 12 ounce. can of soda pop has 8 teaspoons of sugar, a Big Gulp has 64 ounces of soda with approximately 43 teaspoons of sugar per cup. One third of the sugar consumed in this country is in the form of soda pop.

There are so many important facts on this subject that I will have to write about them in two parts but for now let's just look at soft drinks.

Soft drinks steal water from the body. They work very much like a diuretic, which takes away more water than it provides. Just to process the high levels of sugar in soft drinks steals a considerable amount of water from the body. Soft Drinks never quench your thirst, certainly not your body's need for water. Imagine if you gave your houseplant

nothing but soda pop instead of water. How long do think it would last? Constantly denying your body an adequate amount of water can lead to chronic cellular dehydration, a condition that weakens your body at the cellular level. This, in turn, can lead to a weakened immune system and a plethora of diseases.

The elevated levels of phosphates in soft drinks leach vital minerals from your body. A severe lack of minerals can lead to Heart Disease (lack of magnesium), Osteoporosis (lack of calcium) and many other diseases.

Most soft drinks contain caffeine. Caffeine severely interferes with digestion and blood sugar regulation. Caffeine stimulates the adrenal glands to produce epinephrine (adrenaline). Taking size into account, the impact on a 7-year-old child of 3 cans of regular cola is that of 8 cups of coffee on an adult. Epinephrine and high amounts of sugar, in turn, stimulates the pancreas to secrete insulin, thus lowering blood sugar levels. The high amounts of sugar in soft drinks that cause your pancreas to produce an abundance of insulin leads to a “sugar crash.” Chronic elevation and depletion of sugar and insulin can lead to diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and other imbalance related diseases.

We as a nation need to become more informed about our diet and the foods we allow our children to eat. It's not a matter of choice it's a matter of responsibility. We have too much faith in the decisions of our school systems. As the article points out: the food industry is joined by school administrators, who depend on income from the sale of snack food. “Nationwide, schools get \$750 million a year from companies that sell snack and processed foods in schools”.

For more facts about soft drinks and other junk food health hazards look for part 2 of this article in the August issue. Or visit me at my website [www.center4naturalhealth.com](http://www.center4naturalhealth.com)