

Perspective 21 October 2005 - Dr Jill Engelmann

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Here's a statistic to take your breath away.

At least 155 million kids worldwide – about 10 percent of all children - suffer from being overweight or obese.

Countries like the US lead the way with a staggering 30 percent suffering from overweight or obesity. We in Australia are not far behind.

These aren't just plump children who'll grow into large adults. These are children who look forward to a future shaped by a set of symptoms the experts are calling metabolic syndrome – a combination of conditions like diabetes, raised cholesterol and high blood pressure being found more and more to effect adults who suffered childhood obesity.

Prevailing thinking has us reducing consumption of all fats, particularly those saturated fats derived from animal sources. This belief, the 'lipid hypothesis' is based on a theory put forward in the late 1950s by Ancel Keys. ([Learn about Keys in an entertaining 2 ½ minute video](#))

Researchers have spent the last fifty or so years disputing his findings and creating their own theses.

One group, however, was never confused. Vegetable oil and food processing industries immediately saw profit in the 'lipid hypothesis', and set about demonizing traditional, and in many cases natural foods, in favour of their heavily processed products.

Lets go back a little, before Dr Keys came up with his theory, and lets go to the US for some stats.

Before 1920 coronary heart disease was rare and most people were slim. During the next forty years the incidence of heart disease soared. Now heart disease causes at least 40 percent of all U.S. deaths. As we already know, the incidence of obesity has skyrocketed.

From approximately that same period, 1920, to 1970 and at the same time as highly processed vegetable fats were successfully promoted as healthful, the proportion of traditional fats in the American diet fell from 82 percent to 62 percent. Butter consumption fell from 18 lbs (8 Kgs) per person per year, to 4 lbs (1.8 Kgs) per year.

While saturated fat consumption fell, the percentage of vegetable oils as margarine, shortening and refined oils, denatured and chemicalied, increased about 400 percent. Consumption of sugar and processed food increased about 60 percent.

Who's the villain in this story. Animal fats? Or is the villain hydrogenated oils and processed foods?

Remember when pasteurisation of milk was first established as necessary to good health? Did you know heat alters milk's amino acids, locking away the proteins that make milk so healthful?

Heat application allows the unsaturated fatty acids to become rancid over a shorter period. Heat destroys vitamins. And to complete the process of destruction, heat also destroys all enzymes in milk - the enzymes needed to help the body assimilate calcium.

And, by the way, that's how pasteurised milk helps you gain weight.

It's certainly difficult to believe the good news food they've been feeding us for the last fifty years might actually be killing us.

It's already common knowledge that natural foods can work miracles with ADHD children. If natural foods are so beneficial, would they benefit the obese elderly?

A recent and simple study was developed to find out.

25 very overweight or obese adults, most in their 60's, were documented over a 17 week period.

All participants began with a full medical check up. Health problems included diabetes, depression, high blood pressure, elevated triglycerides, urinary tract infections, fibromyalgia and gout.

All gave up processed foods. Instead they ate fresh natural foods including 'unhealthy' butter and raw milk. The test subjects took cod liver oil and magnesium and a dessertspoon of organic coconut oil before each meal.

They also engaged in moderate exercise.

So what did happen to these 25 elderly people at the end of their 17 weeks as guinea-pigs.

Again, they were given a full medical check up. Weight loss ranged from several kg to 18 kg. Most were able to discontinue all drugs. Notably, dangerous triglycerides had normalised, something no other eating plan had been able to achieve.

It's not rocket science – but it works. Fresh nutrient dense foods and moderate exercise can change lives.

It means we can stop this obesity epidemic now.

Guests on this program:

Dr Jill Engemann

Producer: Sue Clark

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