SD to the NEWS

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JUNK FOODS IN SCHOOLS

I nominate West Virginia as the most progressive state in the U.S.A. when it comes to education. Not only are West Virginia parents and teachers concerned about the moral health of their students as affected by textbooks, but they are equally concerned about the physical well-being of their children as affected by unhealthy foods.

West Virginia this fall became the first state to ban the sale of junk foods on school property during school hours. This decision was made after surveys showed that many children were spending their lunch money on such pseudo foods as candy bars, chewing gum, soft drinks, or flavored ice cream.

The principal ingredient of junk foods is sugar -- something that is unnecessary for health or strength of body or mind. The brain and the brawn that designed and built the Egyptian pyramids and the Greek Parthenon achieved greatness without eating cane or beet sugar. The Roman legions that conquered the then known world and the great explorers who discovered the Western Hemisphere managed to fulfill their destiny without sugar.

In addition to plenty of natural sugar in healt ul foods such as fruit and honey, Americans et two pounds of white sugar a week. Many people take a quarter of all their calories in sugar.

Sugar isn't just that white granulated stuff that you dish out with a spoon. When you add up your sugar calories, you must remember to include the sugar content of candy, desserts, and many packaged foods that may not even taste sweet to the average person. ·what matters is the percentage of sugar calories to the rest of your diet.

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,uger is the main cause of cavities in teeth bPcause bncteric f ed on sugr.;;r, converting it to C'1Vi t.1-causi:ng, ncic1 that penetrate t}: (I, tcoth enamel. Sugar is a principal cause of J.. merica 1 s most wide spread. ailment, obesity, whicn in tur: ncrease· your risk *of* lljgh

·blood pressure, hardening of the arteries, anc, if it runs in the family, diabetes.

If you are eating 25 percent 01 your calories in sugar an not n;aining weight, then it follows that youare imply not getting enough essential nutrients for goocl health. This is exactly what happens to all those strinny school chih,ren who spend their lunch money on junk foods.

It is an unconscionable abdication of adult responsibility to allow the easy availa.bility of sugar-junJr in the schools, where peer ressure escalates a sugar habit into a sugar addiction. Sugar satisfies children's hunger with empty calories and deprives them of l,oth the money and. desire for the nutrients they need to develop their growing bodie .

1rhere is no !nore reason to let children elect their own foods than there is to let them se1 ect their own textbooKs. *p,* vital part of the educational process is the development of good habits. It is worth more to have teeth after you are 50 than to have .junk foods before you are I . Someday the 400,000 West Virginia school children will thank their J)arents and teachers for giving them the opportunity to keep their teeth.

P.nd. while we are at it, hm-.r about limiting the use of' food stB 11ps to nutritious foods, '-:irice **what** is involved is the taxpayers' moiiey and the welfare of children, we certainl) have the right to prevent their redemption for junk foods Just ac; we protibit their use for tobacco ana alcohol.

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