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In 1971, *Diet for a Small Planet*, by Frances Moore Lappé argued that global meat production had a devastating effect on the environment and contributed to food scarcity. At the time, it was radical in that it suggested that world hunger was caused not by lack of food, but by poor food policies and practices. Famine was big news back then, and many predicted doomsday scenarios in which the number of people on Earth would soon outstrip the planet's food production potential. Lappé argued that more than enough food calories were produced, but much of it was being fed in the form of



grain to cattle to provide meat for rich countries like the U.S. Producing plant calories that go directly to people, rather than animals for people to eat, would provide more than enough calories to support the world's population. Lappé promoted what is now known as environmental vegetarianism, or vegetarianism for the benefit of the environment.

Since then, more and more studies suggest that what we eat affects not only our health, but the health of the environment. Recently, a coalition of over 30 scientists were brought together to form the EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet, Health. They created the "planetary health diet", a diet that is not only good for human health, but sustainable and good for the environment. The diet involves reducing the consumption of red meat and sugar, and increasing consumption of fruits, vegetables, and other plant-based foods. The authors state that not only will it prevent millions of premature deaths, it will also do less harm to the planet and be more likely to feed the Earth's growing population.

The study looked at global eating patterns now and compared them to what the Planetary Health Diet would recommend. The biggest shift for people in most countries would be a drastic reduction in the amount of red meat they consume. It would mean most people would consume about half the red meat and sugar they consume now. The diet suggests only about one burger a week, or one large steak a month. Chicken and fish can be eaten

more regularly. Beans and nuts should be consumed every day as plant sources of protein. Fruits and vegetables should make up about half of every plate of

food consumed. Consumption of starchy vegetables, such as white potatoes or cassava, an important source of calories in some parts of Africa, should be greatly curbed. The diet also includes a small amount of eggs and dairy, and lots of whole grain carbohydrates, such as whole-wheat bread, brown rice, and other whole grains. Sugar is limited, but healthy oils, like olive oil, is allowed in greater amounts.

This is very similar to what is already recommended by research institutions like the Harvard School of Public Health, government organizations like the USDA, and in line with some of the world's healthiest diets, like the Mediterranean diet. However, instead of promoting only the incentive of better health, this diet shifts the perspective to planetary health. The world population is expected to reach 10 billion by 2050, and the current food practices we have now will become increasingly unsustainable.

The Commission recommends ways for countries to change policies to promote this sort of diet, but you can do your part now by starting to shift toward this diet on your own. Your health depends on it, as well as the health of our planet.

Food Marketing to Kids

Obesity is a major problem in our country, and unfortunately the problem often starts early, in childhood. Being overweight as a child increases the risk of being overweight as an adult, which in turn increases the risks of developing diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and certain forms of cancer. Even if children maintain a healthy weight, the habits they learn in childhood can catch up to them in their adult years.



In fact, the problem with advertising junk food to children is so pervasive and well-researched that some countries and regions, like Quebec, Canada, Norway, and France, have instituted bans or restrictions on advertising for children.

Fortunately, there are some things you can do to educate your kids and protect them from the effects of advertising. Teach your kids to be smart and savvy consumers. Explain

If you watch any television with your kids, you may notice that the ads shown during children's programming are, not surprisingly, targeted toward kids. The foods that are advertised are usually high in sugar, highly processed, and unhealthy. And it's not just television. Kids are exposed to food advertisements in video games, online, on toy packaging, and even in schools. If you walk down the cereal aisle in your local grocery store, you may notice that the sugary cereals with cartoon characters as their mascots are usually placed at eye level for children. Food and beverage companies spend millions of dollars a year marketing their products to children, and few of those products can be considered healthy.

to them that food companies make commercials to get people to spend money on their products. Commercials have catchy songs, funny characters, and delicious-looking pictures of food, all to make you want to buy the product. Talk to them about how honest and accurate commercials and packaging are. For example, if there is a picture of fruit on the package, does that mean there is real fruit in the product? Ask them why their favorite cartoon character is on a cereal box and explain to them that marketers put it there because it will encourage kids to buy the product.

Limit the amount of time your children spend in front of the TV, computer, and phone. Watch tv with your kids, when you can, and talk about the ads you see. If you can, fast forward through the commercials.

Eat regular meals with your kids and talk to them about healthy food choices. Encourage physical activity instead of screen time. And set a good example—you are the biggest role model for your children, so make healthy food choices, get exercise yourself, and limit your own time in front of electronic media.



And ads work—people tend to want to purchase brands and products that they recognize, and this is especially true for children, who aren't savvy enough to understand that commercials are trying to sell them something. Young children do not even perceive the difference between an advertisement and programming. Watching food ads can also cause people to consume more food while watching TV. One study even showed that when children watched TV with food ads, they ate 45% more food than if they watched TV without food ads.



Diet Drinks and Risk of Stroke

People drink diet drinks and use artificial sweeteners because they desire the sweet taste without the calories of sugar. However, studies have shown that artificial sweeteners probably don't aid in weight loss, may negatively affect blood sugar control, and now a study has shown that drinking diet drinks may greatly increase some women's risk of stroke. The study looked at a large group of racially diverse post-menopausal women. It compared women who drank 0-1 diet drink a day to those who drank 2 or more per day. The study found that women who drank 2 or more diet drinks a day were 23% likelier to have a stroke, 31% more likely to have a clot-related stroke, 29% more likely to develop heart disease or have a heart attack, and 16% more likely to die from any cause. The effect was greatest among those who were overweight, and among African American women.



The study suggests that, despite the good intentions people may have in consuming a diet drink, there may be no health benefits to doing so, and there may even be health risks. Most health experts recommend water as one's primary beverage, followed by unsweetened or lightly sweetened tea or coffee, and 100% fruit juice and milk in small quantities.



Diet Soda =



Stroke
Alzheimer's
Diabetes Type II
Obesity

Stroke – there's treatment if you act FAST.

Call 911 at any sign of stroke.



Face
Face look uneven?
Ask the person to smile.



Arm
One arm hanging down?
Ask the person to raise both arms.



Speech
Slurred speech?
Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence.



Time
Call 911 NOW!
If you notice any of these signs,
it's time to call 911.

Peanut Noodles

Peanut noodles are a versatile and forgiving recipe that can be made with what you probably have in your pantry, or with slightly more exotic ingredients. They can be served hot or cold, on their own or topped with chicken, tofu, shrimp, pork or fish—seared tuna is especially good! Peanut butter and sesame paste provide lots of good fats, protein, and minerals, if you choose to forgo meat altogether. The recipe below uses traditional ingredients, but more commonly found substitutions are in parentheses.

Peanut Noodle Recipe

1 pound soba or udon noodles (whole wheat spaghetti noodles)

1 cucumber, seeded and diced

1-2 tomatoes, seeded and diced

(Other veggies like diced carrots, bell pepper, green beans, snow peas, red onion can also be used)

Sauce:

2 tbsp peanut butter

2 tbsp sesame paste/tahini (use more peanut butter if you don't have tahini)

2 tbsp sesame, peanut, or vegetable oil

3 tbsp low sodium soy sauce

2 tbsp rice vinegar (or other mild vinegar)

1 minced garlic clove

1/2 tbsp grated ginger (1 tsp ground ginger)

1/2 tbsp sugar or honey

Optional additions:

1 tbsp sesame seeds or chopped peanuts

A few sheets of dried wakame seaweed, cut in strips

Handful of chopped chives, green onions or cilantro

Cook noodles according to package directions, drain. Combine ingredients for sauce in a separate bowl and whisk together until smooth and adjust to taste. Toss thoroughly with noodles. Add diced vegetables and optional toppings.



Taco Salad

Taco Salad is another versatile recipe that can be made with or without meat. Perhaps the most challenging part is making the taco salad bowls, but that can be done easily with an upside-down muffin tin. Warm the tortillas, then brush or spray lightly with oil. Tuck the tortillas into place between the inverted cups of the muffin tin until you get it into the desired shape. Then bake at about 375 degrees for about 15 minutes, or until slightly firm and crispy.



Chopped lettuce, tomatoes, onions, and cilantro serve as a good base for taco salad, but you can add corn, shredded carrots, cucumbers, and any other vegetables you like. For the vegetarians, add beans, and if you need a little meat, some cooked ground turkey or shredded chicken are tasty additions. Finally, add some other toppings like shredded cheese, guacamole, sour cream, salsa, chopped olives, chopped jalapenos, or whatever you like!



***“We all eat,
and it
would be a
sad waste
of
opportunity
to eat
badly.”***

***– Anna
Thomas***

**Any Nutrition and Wellness News
Questions?**

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