



The Big Picture

A lot of people have forgotten Grandma's rule: "Eat right." They seem to think all calories are created equal. But if physiology didn't matter, prenatal care would be useless; scurvy, rickets, and pellagra wouldn't occur; prescriptions for antidepressants and Ritalin wouldn't work. If humans were just disembodied souls, no kids could be hurt by ingesting lead, mercury, dioxin, etc.

Every day, our bodies work with just a few basic inputs: air, water, and food. Why, then, don't we (1) keep toxins like trans fats out and (2) add essential nutrients like omega-3s and vitamin D in?

Surely, before we spend a dime on new curricula, teacher education, or even leaky roofs, we would want to make sure that kids have excellent food. You will find plenty of data on this site to support the notion "Garbage In, Garbage Out."

But banning harmful products like sodas, donuts, and hydrogenated peanut butter is only a start. The next step is fresh salads, veggies and fruits offered every day. We who organized this website also want to have omega-3-enriched smoothies, breads, and soups for students in California. It is crucial for parents to know how to make sure their child is not vitamin D deficient. Sooner or later, providing organic, locally grown ingredients (some right out of the school garden) will be routine.

Ultimately we want to transform American children's relationship to food. Kids---and adults---can move beyond Junk Food Addiction to appreciate the delights of wholesome sustenance and the joys of sharing meals with others.

True, we are still back at the envisioning stage, rather like when people first thought children shouldn't have to work in factories for 10-12 hours a day, six days a week. "Every child in school? It will never happen!" Well, it did happen. But although kids are now inside the classroom, many are not learning.

Our "impossible dream" is for America's future citizens to be both physically and mentally healthy. Food industry vested interests, uninformed legislators, and bureaucratic inertia cannot block this transformation much longer because the cost to society has reached the tipping point.

Better school meals will lead to productive, happy people, very affordable health care, lower taxes, and greatly reduced rates of mental illness and violence.

Follow the logic:

1. Omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D are crucial for mental and physical health.

- Every cell membrane needs omega-3s, and every cell has vitamin D receptors
- They prevent or heal the Five Biggies¹:
 - Auto-Immune problems like allergies, asthma, arthritis, MS
 - Cancer
 - Central nervous system problems like ADD, autism, depression, obsession
 - Heart disease
 - Obesity (which is related to Syndrome X and diabetes)

2. 90% of Americans are deficient in omega-3s and vitamin D.

- Regarding omega-3s, we don't eat enough grass-fed beef, fish, seaweed, or algae. For vitamin D, we are outside less, wear sunscreen, and eat less fish.
- The average teen eats 6 grams a day of trans fats (anything hydrogenated) - which cancel omega-3s - but the National Academies of Science's Institute of Health says there is no safe level of trans fats.

3. How did we get in this pickle?

- Big Junk Food relies on sugar, fat, and salt to sell its health-killing products. Hydrogenated fats are cheap, and give good texture and a long shelf life.
- The FDA, whose staff often go on to lucrative jobs with Big Junk Food, will neither ban trans fats nor set an RDA (recommended daily allowance) for omega-3s. As for vitamin D, the FDA has set the recommended daily allowance at about a tenth the amount recent research shows is best.

4. How will adequate omega-3s and vitamin D lower taxes and improve the economy?

- About half of local government's budget goes to medical care (for employees, working poor, welfare). Better health = lower costs! Nutrition supports health, Big Pharma only gives symptomatic relief.
- Vast sums could be saved on law enforcement, the courts, and prisons. Barbara Reed Stitt, an Ohio chief probation officer, had a reconviction rate of only 20% for 5,000 probationers who received nutrition education,² rather than the national average of 70%!
- The cost to society from lost productivity due to illness, addiction, and lack of education would be turned around.
- IQ goes up with omega-3 supplementation³ -- people would make better life decisions, work more efficiently, and vote smarter!

1. The Omega Plan, Dr. Artemis Simopoulos, M.D., & Jo Robinson, \$14

2. Food & Behavior, Barbara Reed Stitt, \$10. See Appleton Kids under Success Stories at goodschoolfood.org

3. <http://www.pponline.co.uk/encyc/0057.htm>