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Sugar schooling makes for a sweeter life

SHAPE UP



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As the new school term begins, many parents will be back to their old routine in the mornings – the mad rush to get the kids fed and out to school and themselves to work, all before 9 o'clock.

We've all heard the saying that breakfast is the most important meal of the day and parents are anxious to give their **children** the best start to the day.

But in our fast-paced modern world, time-poor parents often take the easy option and give their **children** a sugar-laden cereal for breakfast.

Development

But parents should know better. **Children** will follow whatever nutrition plan is provided for them. The foods your **children** eat provide the raw materials for their development. You wouldn't put cheap fuel into a car designed only for petrol, but

you don't think twice about providing cheap fuel for your **children**.

Our nutrition habits and the way we eat have changed more in the last 50 years than in the previous 10,000 years. The **food** industry does not want you to know the truth about what you are feeding your **children**. In your role as a parent, it is important to educate yourself and understand **food** labels.

Most cereals are sugar-laden. If parents continue to feed their **children** processed foods like this, obesity levels will continue to rise.

A high-sugar diet can prematurely age you. It can also affect memory, depress the immune system and result in sending high levels of insulin to the blood stream and low levels to the brain.

When it comes to sugar, the less you consume the better. Each ingredient that ends in '-ose' (sucrose, lactose, maltose, dextrose, fructose,...) as well as those that have syrup, fructose corn syrup and honey syrup, are all different types of sugar.

Ingredients listed on **food** labels are listed in order of their size. Consumers know that sugar is bad and so manufacturers will not use total sugar content but instead list them in all their different forms. You should

always add up sugar ingredients in a product to have a better idea of the overall sugar content.

A high-sugar diet plays havoc with our body's ability to regulate its insulin levels and it is one of the reasons diabetes continues to rise in young **children**.

The direct connection between nutrition and disease was not recognised until the late 1970s. M. Hegsted, a professor of nutrition at Harvard Health, claimed that it was saturated fat, cholesterol and more importantly sugar that were the main causes of heart disease, certain causes of cancer, diabetes and obesity.

This was nothing new. In the early 1900s, Weston A. Price labelled white sugar and white flour as the white devils in his book *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration*. These foods also known as non-foods or anti-nutrients displace more nutrients in the body as it tries to process them, than we actually get from eating them.

Children's brains develop according to the foods they eat. Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder or ADHD is a common childhood condition affecting between 2-16pc of school-age **children**. Hyperactivity and mood are also affected by fluctuating blood sugar levels. Foods high in sugar,

like cereals and fruit juices, quickly turn into sugar in the blood, raise insulin levels and end up depositing as fat, eventually leading to obesity.

What you or your child eats in the morning dictates their neuro-transmitter response for the day. A diet high in sugar raises serotonin (the happy hormone) and gives a quick high, followed by a crash, altering concentration levels and mood.

Marketing

Many schools now stock vending machines. They are willing to fry the pupils' brains in exchange for a few euros more in vending machine rent as biscuits, cakes, and certain chocolates contain trans-fats, partially hydrogenated or fractionated fats that increase the risk of atherosclerosis.

Your children's breakfast and nutritional habits should not be influenced by **marketing** campaigns and sugar-laden quick fixes. Educate your **children** about nutrition. They are currently learning eating habits that will determine how they eat for life. Use gluten-free oats or quinoa with fresh fruit as breakfast alternatives.

You can be a better role model a lot earlier by educating yourself and being a shining example.

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