

HEALTH REPORT

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 67

A HEALTHIER DIET FOR CHILDREN BRINGS IMPROVED SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

A study in Canada confirms what most elementary and secondary school teachers already know – that children who have a healthy diet perform better in school than children who have an unhealthy diet.

Almost 5,000 Canadian 5th grade students were involved in this recently completed study. It was entitled the Children's Lifestyle and School Performance Study and was conducted by researchers at the University of Alberta.

Researchers established that a healthy diet consisted of fruits, vegetables, protein, calcium, grains, a good amount of dietary fiber and a moderate amount of fat. A diet that would be less healthy would have fewer intakes of these items and be heavy in saturated fats and salt. Students were measured in terms of their dietary intake, height and weight and assessed against a diet quality index to summarize the overall diet of each child.

A standardized literacy test was then given to each student. The object of this was to examine the association between the indicators of a good diet or a poor diet and overall academic performance.

Researchers learned that students with the healthier diets were significantly less likely to fail the literacy assessment test. In fact, when comparing the students with the best diet against those with the lowest dietary index scores, the top group was 41 percent less likely to fail the literacy assessment.

"We demonstrated that above and beyond socioeconomic factors, diet quality is important to academic performance," said the study authors lead by Paul J. Veugerlers, PhD. "These findings support the broader implementation and investment in effective school nutrition programs that have the potential to improve a student's diet quality, academic performance, and, over the long term, their health."

This information aligns nicely with an emphasis on a healthy lifestyle and good nutrition for both adults and children as can be provided with a visit to a chiropractor or acupuncturist. This is especially true in the case of a child who has been labeled with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Parents would be very wise to have such a child examined by a natural healthcare professional before taking drugs that are too often prescribed today. A healthy diet and improved nutrition may be all that is needed to put the child on the road to success in school.

Source: The University of Alberta. "Children with Healthier Diets do Better in School." Press Release. March 2008.

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