

Meridian Technical Charter High School

Nutritionally Bereft

An inquiry into the diets and health of Idaho residents

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate how common food sold in the grocery store has degraded nutritionally, and is causing a majority of the major health problems. Through scientific, anecdotal, and empirical evidence, this paper shows undeniably how processed food shortens our life spans and causes cancer, strokes, angina, diabetes, and many other health problems. In addition, this paper offers alternative diet options, and persuades the reader to pursue a healthier diet to increase their life spans, particularly by comparing the effects of tobacco use versus the effects of poor nutritional health. The paper also covers how, through diet, our economy is negatively impacted by health care costs due to the higher prevalence of expensive and sometimes terminal health complications. This paper emphasizes the prevalence of colorectal cancer in relation to processed foods, and how the colon can negatively impact health when exposed to unhealthy food. This paper examines how the diet of Idaho residents is nutritionally bereft.

It has long been observed that agriculture has been the most important technological advancement in the history of mankind, because it allowed people to stop having to spend their days foraging for food. Agriculture gave early civilizations time to do other things, like build the pyramids, for example. Over the centuries, agriculture has been refined down to genetically ideal plant specimens and has undergone a lot of processing. Unfortunately, genetic modification, processing, and even cooking takes a majority of the nutritional value out of our food. We have been living in a world where the food is primarily nutritionally bereft. Many people do not recognize how important good nutritional health is. If it is sold in the grocery stores, how bad can it be for you? The fact is, a bad diet can kill you faster than smoking will, and Idahoan's diets are severely lacking. Diet is one the most important factors in our lives to keep us healthy, young, and functional. A very healthy diet can reverse aging, get rid of seemingly unrelated health problems, and reduce the risk of cancer and other diseases like diabetes by a large margin. There must be a paradigm shift if we wish to overcome the primary fatal diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular disease.

A lot of this information on health and nutrition came about in the 1920s from Doctor Norman Walker. Norman Walker was born in 1886, and died in 1985 at the age of ninety-nine. He was truly living proof of his teachings, which namely included "juicing", colon health, and raw foods. Norman Walker said in his nineties: "I can truthfully say that I am never conscious of my age. Since I reached maturity, I have never been aware of being any older, and I can say, without equivocation or mental reservation, that I feel more alive, alert, and full of enthusiasm today than I did when I



was 30 years old. I still feel my best years are ahead of me. I never think of birthdays, nor do I celebrate them. Today I can truthfully say that I am enjoying vibrant health, I don't mind telling people how old I am: I AM AGELESS!" (Walker). Despite the empirical evidence of the promising health benefits, there has only been a very small cultural paradigm shift since the introduction of this information in the 1920s. However, a subculture of vegans and health fanatics have been gaining some influence, and many people and products are going organic, green, and vegan.

So, what is so great about organic, natural, vegan, and raw food? It has been shown in studies that gorillas choose organic bananas over non-organic bananas (Ash 11). Similar experiments have been repeated with other vegetables, and other animals, but the result is typically the same. Animals do not want to eat non-organic foods. One may surmise that animals can sense that the food is not natural. If an animal does not want to eat non-organic food, then I certainly do not. Perhaps the most important difference between organic and non-organic farmers is that “[Organic Farmers] pay attention to where their seeds come from, where their water comes from, what kind of inputs they add to the soil, and how close they are in proximity to toxins from other farms” (Ash 12). On the other hand, non-organic farmers will not eat their own corn, because they know it is genetically modified and has little nutritional value (Ruppert). When it comes to food, it would definitely be preferred that you know someone cared for the food that one is ingesting, to ensure that it is healthy, delicious, and most

importantly, not carcinogenic or disease causing.

Since I was born, I have always eaten my grandmother's cooking, who is a vegetarian who only uses organic food. The food she cooked was very strange to me, quinoa, kale, homemade sour yogurt and other such foods. They tasted basic to me, but I suppose that is because I have had a lifetime of oversaturated food, full of artificial flavoring that makes something taste much more strongly than normal. In a way, the food was settling. I knew that it would not upset my stomach, or make me sick. It was just good quality food, and it tasted good, in its own way. I loved her cooking, because I got to eat healthy, where normally I eat very little healthy foods. Lately, I have taken a much stronger interest in diet due to my recent encounter with Greg Ruppert.

Greg Ruppert was a client at my workplace with a very strange personality. He is forgetful, silly, open and brilliant in a way. Ruppert wanted to have a meeting with me to discuss his book; he is in the process of releasing a book about an experience that he had with healthy foods that is very interesting. In an interview he told me that story. He became a millionaire when he sold his business just before the housing market collapsed. He was sitting on more money than he could imagine; he would never have to work another day in his life. A short while later, he was diagnosed with terminal Hepatitis C, which caused terminal liver cancer. That is a lot to take in. He started a treatment of interferon, which is essentially poison. He had to take the interferon for a full year, or else he would die. The interferon made him sick all day, every day. Finally, he completed his one year treatment and things were looking up. The doctor told him

his test showed positive results. The next day he got a call, and the doctor had made a mistake. His counts were at twelve million, which is as high as it gets. The doctor told him to start making funeral plans (Ruppert).

Through a lucky string of events in a desperate attempt to survive, Ruppert was connected with a man who wanted three-thousand dollars to help him using natural methods. Ruppert thought this guy was going to take his money and run, he was snakeoil salesman in his mind. But Ruppert took a chance. He went to the jungles of Peru with a Cheyenne-Lakota indian to pursue a plant-based cure. The rules were that he had to eat vegan food, and take plant medicines like uña de gato and ayahuasca. Blue, his healer, told him that it was not he that would save him. You will save yourself. This food will turn your immune system back on, and your body will heal itself. That resonated with Ruppert, “The body has the ability to heal itself” he repeats to me. A few months later, he was completely clear of his terminal Hepatitis C and liver cancer (Ruppert).

Food is like medicine, and if you eat right then you can prevent serious health problems, extend your lifespan, and keep yourself fit, healthy and functional throughout your entire life. According to Aaron Ash:

There is plenty of scientific evidence endorsing the advantages of eating a diet full of raw, organic fruits, veggies, seeds, and nuts. Organic, vegan, and raw foods are beneficial for the treatment of arthritis and fibromyalgia; they help to prevent diet-related cancers and cardiovascular disease, and play a role in preventing, treating, and even reversing type-2 (adult onset) diabetes, and they

can be helpful for weight loss. (12)

As you can see, this is not something unattainable or ridiculous. There is just a lot of denial and resistance when it comes to a complete dietary change. A healthy diet is one the best ways to stay healthy throughout your entire life, and can prevent many diet related diseases from forming in your body (Ash 13). Would you eat healthy to avoid diabetes, cancer, and heart disease?

Weight loss is frequently mentioned when it comes to keeping a healthy diet. But why? Is it simply that people want to feel more attractive? Although physical attraction is great motivation to lose weight, another much more important reason is that fat causes cancer. According to a recent study, fat is a very important contributor to colorectal cancer (Bloom 6). How fat affects cancer survival rates has been heavily studied, especially on obesity and cancer survival. Data suggests obesity gives cancer patients protection from treatment related toxicity, but is a negative factor in cancer survival rates (Shaw 14). Not only will a bad diet cause obesity, it will cause cancer and increase the chance of death due to that cancer. Obesity was recognized as an epidemic in the United States, and for good reason. "Overeating, weight gain in adulthood, and obesity are strongly implicated as risk factors for colorectal cancers" (Bloom 5).

In fact, obesity is so bad that it is less healthy than smoking. It would serve you better to smoke and eat healthy than the opposite, not smoking and eating poorly. Tobacco use can affect a person's lifespan by up to 9.8%, where diet can affect a person's lifespan by up to 10%. A healthy diet is more important than not smoking to live a long, healthy life (Diet and Disease in Modern Society). If you can avoid smoking

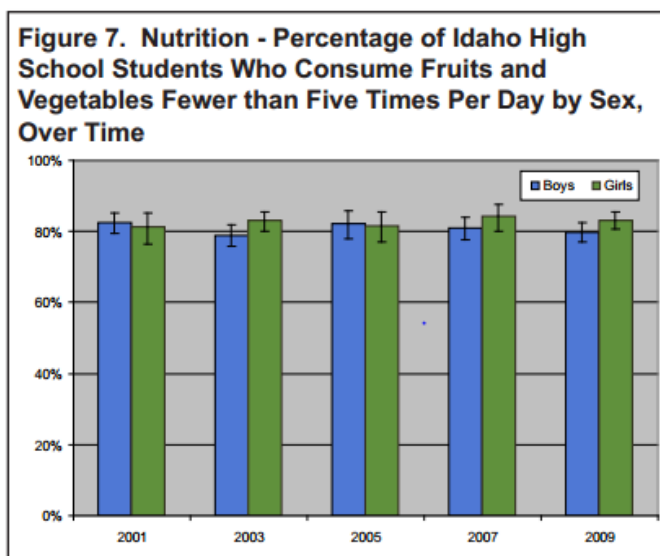
and junk food throughout your life, you could extend your life by almost twenty percent. With an average lifespan of seventy-six years, that would be an additional fifteen years of life. If the entire world did this, then the average lifespan would rise to approximately ninety-one years old.

In the United States, the major killers are cancer and cardiovascular disease. Many people have studied why we have so many cases of this, and the answer is quite simple. Processed food is bad for you, which makes up a large part of Idahoan's diets. Processed food's negative health effect is demonstrated by the fact that colon cancer develops twice as often in developed countries as it does in developing countries, which is largely suspected to be due to processed food being more difficult to digest and worse for you nutritionally (Bloom 1). In fact approximately thirty-five percent of all deaths from cancer can be directly attributed to diet and lifestyle (DeLegge 150). The colon is the most susceptible to diet related cancers because food spends a lot of time in the colon. If you do not eat healthy, you will get a buildup of putrefying food. Since all blood runs through the walls of the colon, you could be circulating that toxic waste back into your blood, if you're colon is not healthy. Getting away from processed foods is perhaps the healthiest step Idahoans can take in the pursuit of good health and longevity. The American Cancer Society recommends a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and mushrooms, not only to keep the colon and the rest of the body healthy, but also as a recommended alternative therapy or supplementary therapy while dealing with cancer.

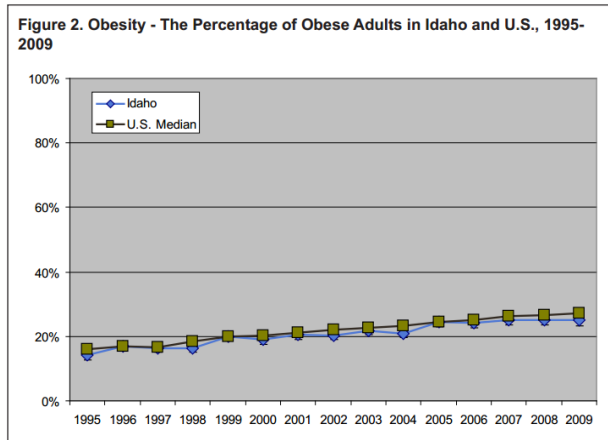
For many people, the colon is one the least healthy and most neglected organs

in their body. Being constipated or having diarrhea is a sign that your colon is not healthy, which for most people happens a majority of the time. Part of the problem is that nobody wants to talk about the colon, which is fair. Luckily, you would not have to if your diet was, by default, healthy, raw, vegan and organic. It was recently discovered that Elvis Presley died from chronic constipation, rather than a drug overdose. Elvis is well known to have a notoriously southern-style diet, consisting of low amount of fiber and high amount of fat. In fact, his colon was nearly triple its normal diameter. Elvis's doctor tried to help, but Elvis was very embarrassed. He did not want to show weakness, and so his condition went untreated until it caused his untimely demise (Nichopoulos).

In Idaho, obesity is recognized as an epidemic. Costing taxpayers more than one-hundred billion dollars in healthcare costs, and afflicting many people with diet related diseases, obesity “is now rivaling tobacco use as the leading cause of preventable death” (Health



and Welfare). As you can see from “Figure 7” taken from Health and Welfare’s “The Obesity Epidemic in Idaho”, more than eighty percent of males and females eat less than five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. As you can see by the chart labeled “Figure 2”, Idaho is not immune to this epidemic. In fact, Idaho is only slightly below



the United States' median rate of obesity.

In Idaho alone, a clear correlation can be seen between obesity rates and diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, heart disease, angina, stroke, heart attack, depression, arthritis and asthma to name a few. Having lived in

Idaho for the past eighteen years, I am very aware of what Idahoan's diets look like. Namely, Idahoan's diets includes fast food, microwaveable food, meat, butter, wheat, and dairy. This style of diet is one that promotes obesity and health complications (Health and Welfare).

There is a lot of evidence supporting the fact that a world where we eat natural, raw, vegan food is fundamentally superior to the one where we are eating processed junk food, and disgusting faux-food. Diet is the most important factor in our lives, and it affects nearly every aspect of our lives. Health Care costs would go down without the prevalence of heart disease, obesity, and cancer, our lives would last longer, and we would not have nearly as many people severely affected by obesity. It is time to really take a look at our diets, and ask ourselves how, in this day and age, we can be eating things so disgusting, nutritionally void and utterly bad for health. I firmly believe that this world can and will exist in the future, but in order for that to happen, people must be informed about the benefits of changing their diet, permanently, for natural, vegan and raw food. What do you think of your diet now?

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<<http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Health/IPAN/ObesityEpidemic.pdf>>.

Walker, Norman. *The Natural Way to Vibrant Health*. Bentonville: Norwalk Press, 2008. Print.

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Ash, Aaron. *Gorilla Food : Living and Eating Organic, Vegan, and Raw*. New York:

Arsenal Pulp Press, 2012. Ebook Library. Web. 06 Feb. 2014.

Gorilla Food discusses the story of his restaurant that is based on the idea of natural, organic, raw foods - fast. A lot of the book is about recipes but the introduction has a lot of pertinent information about the health benefits and nutritional information pertaining to that kind of diet. I will be using this source in my essay.

Bloom, Miriam. *Understanding Colon Cancer*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi,

2002. Ebook Library. Web. 06 Feb. 2014.

Understanding Colon Cancer talks about how nutrition and diet affect colon cancer, statistics about diet versus colon cancer rates, and other information. The colon is important to my topic because the colon essentially handles nutrition, and if it is not healthy, then you are not healthy. I will be using this source in my essay.

Shaw, Clare. *Nutrition and Cancer*. Chichester, West Sussex, U.K: Blackwell, 2011.

Internet resource.

Nutrition and Cancer talks about the treatment and management of cancer patients, and how their nutritional status affects them. It contains a lot of information very closely tied in with my subject, particularly about malnutrition and health

complications. This source is more technical, but provides better facts and statistics. I will definitely be using this source.

DeLegge, Mark H. Nutrition and Gastrointestinal Disease. Totowa, N.J: Humana Press, 2008. Internet resource.

Nutrition and Gastrointestinal Disease discusses the effect of nutrition on issues such as liver failure and pancreatitis. I will be using this source, as it discusses health problems associate with nutrition, which is what my topic is about.

American Cancer Society Complete Guide to Complementary & Alternative Cancer Therapies. Atlanta, Ga: American Cancer Society, 2009. Internet resource.

A book by the American Cancer Society on alternative therapies must have some interesting information about it. This book discusses dealing with cancer in other ways, such as with vitamins and minerals, which ties into nutrition perfectly. I will be using this source.

Campbell, T C, and Howard Jacobson. Whole: Rethinking the Science of Nutrition. , 2013. Print.

“Whole” talks about how plant based foods dramatically decrease the risk of certain diseases, including obesity, cancer, diabetes and heart disease. These are the major killers in our world right now. I did not however, end up using this source.

Ruppert, Greg. Personal Interview. 24 Feb 2014.

Greg Ruppert is a cancer survivor and friend of mine that preaches the benefits of good nutrition. His story is one of intrigue and wonder, that takes you through the jungles of Peru. Greg was able to be healed of cancer and Hepatitis C using only natural plant based medicine and practicing a raw vegan diet. I've listened to stories Greg has told me for months now, and they never cease to amaze me. This is why I will be using Greg as a source, because he is an expert in experience.

Diet and Disease in Modern Society. New York, N.Y: Films Media Group, 2005. Internet resource.

Diet and Disease in Modern Society talks about why convenient foods are so bad for you, why obesity is a national epidemic and how diet causes problems like high blood pressure and heart disease. I will use this source in my essay.

Spurlock, Morgan, dir. *Super Size Me*. Youtube, 2004. Film. 25 Feb 2014.

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Q-ezCOCVmg>>.

Spurlock's "Super Size Me" is an excellent documentary about the fast food industry, and it's negative effects on health. I did not end up using this source.

Kenner, Robert, dir. *Food, Inc.*. Youtube, 2012. Film. 25 Feb 2014.

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Oq24hITFTY>>.

A look into the fast food industry, where it comes from, and how disgusting it

is. I did not end up using this source.

Nichopoulos, George. *The King and Dr. Nick*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009. Print.

Dr. Nichopoulos was Elvis's private doctor. In his book, he talks about what really killed Elvis. I used this in my essay.