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Danger of Fast Food In and Around Schools

With all of the talk about making school lunches healthier by adding more fruits and vegetables but students haven't shown much sign of being healthier. Why? Because schools both provide them with and allow their students to eat fast food. Schools have focused too much on budget too little on the health of their students, especially when it comes to what is accessible to them like sugary drinks and the ability to leave school grounds.

During the great depression, obviously money was low. Budget cuts affected everyone including schools. It's because of the lack of money that school lunches have decreased in quality. Accountants in charge of the budget to try to find the cheaper option for food sources. In Source C, it is explained how the lack of "food ambassadors" in schools results in lack of creativity when it comes to school lunches. He says that because the schools are run by accountants, they only buy cheaper food to save money. This results in schools buying fast foods, sometimes even from fast food companies (Source C). This obviously is a health risk for children and students as they eat cheap processed food two times a day, five days a week.

Now what about the movement for better food? Hasn't that made an impact on school lunches? The answer is yes, schools do provide healthier options like soups and sandwiches but often times it's much easier to just grab a slice of pizza or a burger. It's all about accessibility,

whatever is most accessible to students is often what they will go for. This is also true for schools that allow students to leave campus during lunch hours. In source A, the study examined how the proximity of fast food restaurants and tobacco outlets and schools were related."Evidence suggests that the availability of fast-food restaurants (FFRs) near schools is associated with higher body mass index..." (Source A). The study also shows that students are more likely to eat at fast food restaurants when permitted to leave campus for lunch. Such restaurants are aware of this and strategically place themselves near schools which only makes it easier for students to eat there. This contributes to the issue of trying to improve the diets of students because of the inability to control where or how often they leave campus for lunch.

This also leads into the topic of sugary beverages. In source D, the article provides a data table from the research on the effects of sugary beverages and fresh fruits and vegetables in a child's diet and health leading into their adult life. In one of several data tables it is shown the effects of removing sugary beverages, adding more fruits and vegetables and both to the rate of deaths by dietary deaths. From removing sugary beverages alone the rate of deaths decreases by over 10,000 people yearly for CHD or Coronary heart disease and almost 15,000 people yearly for the total CMD or Congenital muscular dystrophy (source D). How is this related to fast food in schools? Its because soft served drinks are not only served in fast food restaurants that students often go to but are also serve at school. Most if not all schools provide snacks and drinks throughout the day through vending machines. These machines make it easy to just grab a drink or pack of doughnuts. But sugary drinks are one of the most dangerous items that you can consume for your health due to the high concentration of sugar and the lack of fiber to balance the sugar intake out out.

Schools allowing and providing their students with fast food options is dangerous and risky for their health. The accessibility is the main reason that students continually eat it as well as the cheapness of it and ease of getting dangerous foods and drinks to your health. Being able to give students and children a healthier life overall isn't something that can be controlled but what can be controlled is what they consume twice a day everyday for almost 10 years of their life. Though it may not be easy, the removal of fast foods from schools will dramatically change the course of the students lives and hopefully give them a healthier and happier life.

Word count [692]

Work Cited:

Source A:

D'Angelo, Heather, et al. "Sociodemographic Disparities in Proximity of Schools to Tobacco Outlets and Fast-Food Restaurants." *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 106, no. 9, Sept. 2016, pp. 1556–1562. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.2105/AJPH.2016.303259.

Source C

Oliver, Jamie. "Teach Every Child about Food." *TED*, TED, Feb. 2010, https://www.ted.com/talks/jamie_oliver?language=en.

Source D

Rosettie, Katherine L., et al. "Comparative Risk Assessment of School Food Environment Policies and Childhood Diets, Childhood Obesity, and Future Cardiometabolic Mortality in the United States." *PLoS ONE*, July 2018, pp. 1–15. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0200378.